



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

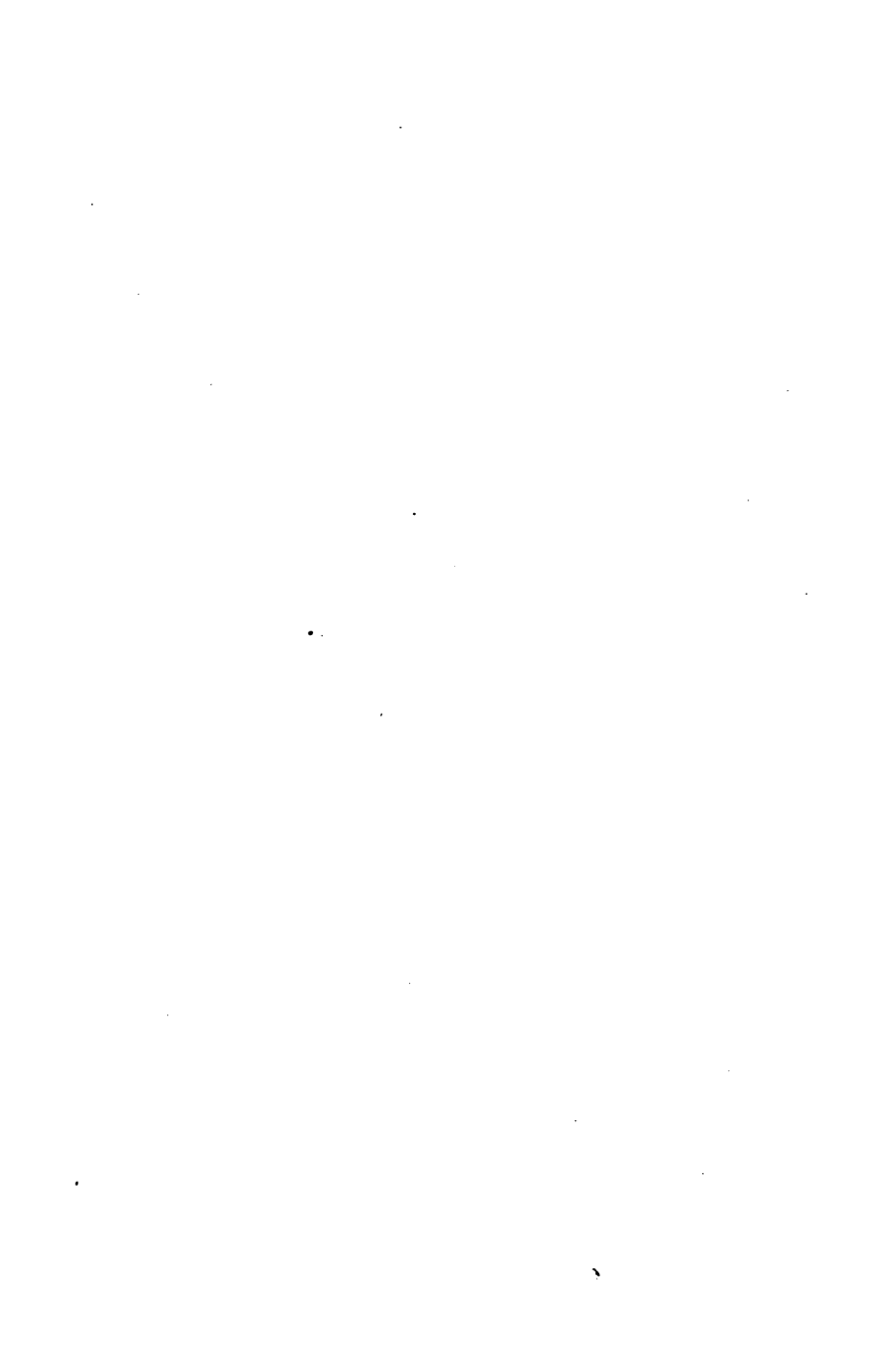
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



JOHN HAZLEHURST;

OR,

ORIGINAL SIN.

BY

MISS HUDDLESTON,

Author of "MILLY CLIFFORD," "AMY ATHELSTONE," "GALVESTON,"

"RUEBEN GAUNT," etc.



LONDON

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

LEEDS: WALKER AND LAYCOCK, BOOKSELLERS, 37, BRIGGATE.

1881.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

251. g. 221.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. BANKING	1
„ II. TWELVE YARDS OF FLANNEL	9
„ II. FEED MY LAMBS	15
„ IV. EVE'S DAUGHTER	23
„ V. 'TRIP,' AND THE DEVIL	31
„ VI. OWNING HER WEAKNESS	39
„ VII. OWD GRANNY	47
„ VIII. PRIMROSES	55
„ IX. TWO POUND TEN	65
„ X. TWO WEDDINGS	74
„ XI. OLD CHRISTMAS	82
„ XII. THE WHIP HAND	90
„ XIII. ONLY A MOUSE	98
„ XIV. 'TRIP'S' SERMON	108
„ XV. THE GOOSE FEAST	115
„ XVI. 'CASTLE RUSHON'	123
„ XVII. COPYRIGHT	130
„ XVIII. CHAT	143
„ XIX. ONE WHO SERVES	149
„ XX. A YOUNG COLT... ..	156
„ XXI. THE TESTIMONY	163
„ XXII. THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET	176
„ XXIII. GREEN PASTURES	183
„ XXIV. A HINDOO TENET	192
„ XXV. LAUDABLE PRINCIPLES	199
„ XXVI. 'SING A SONG FOR SIXPENCE'	207
„ XXVII. A FLASH	215
„ XXVIII. TEA KETTLE	221
„ XXIX. A SUMMUT	228
„ XXX. JUBILEE... ..	236
„ XXXI. MAIDEN SPEECH	245

IN PREPARATION FOR THE PRESS.

“ONWARD.”

BY ALETHEA M. HUDDLESTON.

JOHN HAZLEHURST;

OR ORIGINAL SIN.

CHAPTER I.

BANKING.

‘MASTER JACK, will you take care of Nettie, while I run across and ask how Maria Webster is?’

‘May we go on to Strammongate Bridge and make ducks and drakes in the river?’

‘No dear, I wont stay long ; then you shall buy your sweets.’

‘I want India Rock, from Dalriddle’s,’ said the girl.

The children marched demurely up and down, for some time watching an old man breaking stones. ‘Who is that Jack?’ asked Nettie, pointing towards the Crescent.

‘A Negro.’

‘No, young gentleman,’ interposed the stone-breaker, ‘he is a Turk.’

‘What is a Turk?’

‘A Mohammedan.’

‘And what is a Mohammedan, pray?’

‘A heathen.’

‘How, shocking,’ exclaimed Nettie, ‘does he know nothing about Jesus?’

‘He knows of nothing but the bow-string,’ laughed the man.

‘What is a bow-string?’

Their instructor shook his head, and lifted his hammer as a polite intimation he wished to be left alone.

'Look, Jack, the Turk must be cold ; he is trying to warm his hands by clapping them. I wish he had a pair of papa's fur gloves.'

'One of Lister's shawls would do better.'

'I dont think Ann will give him one.'

'She ought, for Robinson has sent her another Paisley.'

'Jack,' said Nettie with a bright smile, 'Suppose we trust God with our coppers ?'

'Trust God. How, pet ?'

'By giving them to the Turk.'

'I want some toffy,' grumbled the lad, with a sudden feeling of selfishness.

'India Rock would be nice ; but papa says God always pays back money given to the poor, seven-fold.'

Jack pulled out some halfpence, then buttoned up his pockets. 'I never saw Him pay money,' he said, decidedly.

'Neither did I, but papa would not tell a lie.' She walked up to the man, and put threepence into his hand.

Jack followed slowly, and did the same. 'Now what must we do, he questioned ?'

'Wait for Ann, then go to Dalrimple's.'

'We have no money, you goose.'

'We have.'

'Where ?'

'In Heaven's Bank.'

Lister came up at the moment. They told her eagerly what they had done. She certainly felt staggered, but instantly resolved not to throw cold water on their faith. 'So,' she said, pleasantly, 'you have done quite right, children.'

'Will God meet us, nurse, or how will He pay ?' inquired Nettie.

'Wait and see, dear,' but in Finkle-street her steps became slow, and a quivering was visible about the mouth.

'We are nearly at the shop. It is jolly having money in Heaven's Bank,' cried Jack.

'Would you like to leave it there for a time,' questioned Lister.

'No ! I want to ascertain how God does business,' he replied.

Ann paled. 'Oh ! Lord,' she prayed, 'Thou knows these little ones have given Thee their mite : dont let their faith be shaken.' They reached the shop, still no solution of the difficulty came. 'We must go first to Waterloo House, I have some ribbon to buy,' she said, coaxingly.

'That place is only fit for women,' answered Jack, contemptuously.

'What were you saying, sir,' exclaimed a gentleman.

'That Waterloo House is a woman's place, Rector.'

'May I ask where that smart suit was bought,'

'In London, it is just like a Middy's,' responded the lad with consequence.

'What have you been doing to-day?'

'Banking, sir.'

'Quite right. Where have you deposited?'

'In Heaven's Bank.'

'Humph ! muttered Mr. Wallace.' He opened the shop door, and pushed the children gently in. Cakes and bonbons were purchased with a lavish hand.

'This is more than seven-fold,' whispered Nettie, showing a large packet of toffy.

'The other will be what papa calls twenty-five per cent, replied Jack.

'Has your mistress driven the children into town, Lister,' asked Mr. Wallace'

'No, sir, we came with Mr. Osborn.'

'I have my pony carriage at the Commercial. Allow me, please, to take these young folks, for the day to Greystone.'

'Do let us go, Ann,' pleaded Jack.

'Your mamma might be cross if I do.'

'I will make that right with Mrs. Singleton this evening,' said the Rector.

'Thank you, sir, don't permit them to have too many sweets.'

'Very well; I will bring them home in good time. Give my compliments to Mr. Osborn.'

'I trust nurse won't make any herb tea,' sighed Nettie.

'She always gives us half a cupful when we have been playing at the rectory, sir.'

'What for, Jack.'

'Because you spoil us.'

'That is a serious charge; let us hope she will not bring it before a Maternal Court.'

'What beautiful horses. May I pat them?' questioned Nettie.

'Yes, Queen, have you got a biscuit?'

'I will give her one,' cried the lad, good naturedly.

They had a pleasant drive, and thought it good fun to pass their own home without calling. Greystone Rectory was a large old-fashioned mansion, with extensive garden and orchard. The house was considered by young parishioners a capital place to play hide and seek in; and the echo of merry laughter soon sounded everywhere. Mr. Wallace watched, and smiled serenely at their gambles, submitting at last to have an handkerchief bound over his eyes and act blind-man. This game went on with zest till a servant, like an unwelcome apparition, entered, saying 'Visitors, sir.'

His master hastily pulled off the Cambric band, and looked at the card. 'Where is Mr. Longley, Aaron,' he said.

'In the dining-room, sir.'

The Rector glanced down at his cassock: it was awfully dusty. 'Go to my study, children: but mind, you are not to touch papers.'

'I wonder people like books,' pouted Nettie.

'Because they are stupid,' replied Jack, gazing steadily at a costly little clock. 'I would like to make one,' he murmured.

'Try,' she whispered. 'It does tick nice.'

'It chimes, too. If I had the thing down I might do something.'

'Stand on this chair and hold me up, then I can get it for you.'

The coveted treasure was soon on the table. Victor Hugo says, 'Children have so little claim to purgatory that if they saw it they would look at it with pleased wonder!' We cannot endorse that, for many children we know are frequently enthralled by spirits of mischief and self will. Jack stood with burning cheeks and compressed lips looking at the timepiece. 'I'll try,' he exclaimed, and instantly set to work.

'What are you doing,' gasped Nettie.

'Taking it to pieces.'

'What will Mr. Wallace say?'

'Hush!' cried the lad, quivering with excitement. 'I see how it's made.'

'Do be quick, Mr. Longley is going. I hear him in the hall.'

'I am putting it together now.'

'How long will you be?'

'A few minutes.'

But Jack found mending more difficult than breaking. While he strove to solve the problem the Rector entered. 'Are you ready for dinner,' he said. Then his eyes fell on the young machinist.

'I am putting it right,' Mr. Wallace: please don't be angry.'

'You have grieved me very much.'

Jack raised his clear, truthful eyes to the Rector's. 'Forgive me, do forgive me, sir. I only wished to find out how a clock was made.'

'Have you done so?'

'Yes, and if you will allow me, I can put it right again.'

'Do so then. I will return in an hour. Come, Nettie, to dinner.'

Jack carefully examined the works. 'I'll soon have the thing in order,' he thought, but fifteen minutes passed and still no success. 'These wheels are hard to adjust : I wish my box of tools were here.' Large drops of sweat gathered on his brow, and he felt like a soldier who had fought well, but is defeated.

'Time up. How goes it,' cried the Rector cheerfully, for he observed the lad's deep mortification.

Jack sighed, and pointed to the table.

'Never mind. I have been mastered myself before to-day.'

'But I do not like to be conquered.'

'No one does.'

'Mr. Wallace.'

'Well, Jack.'

'Will you put the clock away, until I learn to repair it?'

'I will.'

'Don't permit any person to touch it.'

'I won't. Now run and get your dinner.'

'May I lay this aside first?'

'Yes, and in six months you shall try again.' Two years afterwards the case was covered with black velvet, and the Rector wrote, 'In Memoriam.'

The days passed swiftly, and on the following Monday Jack went to school. The first morning all seemed bustle, chatter, and confusion : presently the recess bell rang, and off they scampered to play cricket. Jack stood a little apart watching with interest the progress of the game. A ball suddenly flew side way, and struck him : he fell with a sharp cry of pain, and was carried in unconscious. The news that Singleton was hurt soon spread throughout the school, and a group of anxious lads gathered on the corridor leading to his bedroom.

'He looks a plucky chap,' exclaimed a boy of fourteen. 'Gordon says he will be jolly rich.'

'Where does he come from, Holdford?'

'Somewhere in the North.'

'Is his mother living?'

'I do not know, but Clifford does; he comes from the same place.'

'Here's the Doctor. I wonder if he would tell us how Jack is?'

'Ask him, Wilson.'

'You do, Gordon.'

The lad went willingly, and made the inquiry.

'What does he say?' they questioned eagerly.

'That Singleton is very ill.' They separated silently.

That evening a telegraph messenger was asking in Grey-stone for Holly Bank.

'Mamma, what does that boy in a blue coat want: has he brought papa a letter?' said Nettie.

'I presume so, love.'

'From Jack?'

The child's words were simple, yet they shot like an arrow to her mother's heart.

'Mary!' called Mr. Singleton, hastily. She turned and saw her husband holding an open telegram in his hand.

'What is it, Gilbert?'

'I must leave you at ten-thirty.'

'Why, dear?'

'Jack is a little hurt, so I think it advisable to pop over and see him myself.'

'Can I go?'

'No, love.'

'You will send me a telegram in the morning.'

'Immediately I have seen him.'

'If there is any danger, say I may come.'

'I will.'

Mr. Singleton found Jack alarmingly ill: still, to his inexpressible relief, conscious again. 'Is that you, papa?' were almost the first words he pronounced.

'Yes, my son. I lost no time in coming to you.'

'Where is mother? I want her very much.'

'At home. I promised to take you to her, so be quick and get better.'

A shade of keen anguish flashed across the sick boy's face. Then he piteously exclaimed, 'Father, I am crippled for life.'

'Who said so?'

'I heard the Doctor, just now.'

'You may have misunderstood him.'

'No, papa, I did not.'

Mr. Singleton bent down and kissed the trembling lips : never mind,' he murmured, 'You are my bonnie Jack, still.'

'Shall I be as precious?'

'Ten times more so.'

'Then I won't fret, or care for pain.'

'You seem tired love, try to sleep.'

'Will you stay besides me, please?'

'Yes, but I must send mamma a telegram. Have you a message?'

'Say I am coming home for a long holiday.'

'All right, child,' said his father, with a forced smile and aching heart.

Mrs. Singleton started for Headland immediately she received the telegram, and nursed her darling with unceasing care for three weeks ; then the Doctor gave permission for him to be taken home. The journey to Kendal tried Jack's strength fearfully : as the servants carried him to his room his mother for the first time seemed to realize how helpless he had become, and determined sea air should be procured without loss of time.

'I shall get you strong yet, my boy,' she triumphantly exclaimed, when they had been at Sandside a month ; 'there is a bright rose on your cheek to-day.'

Jack glanced at his crutch, then sighed.

'Don't dear, don't.'

'Why not?'

'It pains me.'

'Forgive me, mamma, I will be brave and bear this cross with patience; but it is very heavy.'

'Think of Calvary, and the thorn-crowned Redeemer.'

'He was God, I am only a boy,' he replied, with a shower of scalding tears.

Mrs. Singleton placed her arm tenderly round him, and gently said, 'lean on Christ, my son.'

'I will, mother; has papa gone to the beach?'

'Yes, and taken your fishing rod to the boat.'

'I shall never be a Middy now.'

'No love, but your father intends to buy a yacht and take us a cruise. You will like that.'

'No, I shall not,' he answered with decision, 'to a born sailor such things are make-believes.'

'How do you know that you were born to be a sailor?'

'The love for water and a longing to be afloat, tells me.'

'Then you don't care to go?'

'I would rather sit in the boat, and look at the Lake Mountains.' 'But, mamma, why are you cutting up those cakes of white wax?'

'To make a bouquet of snowdrops for you.'

'For me. Do you love snowdrops, mother?'

'Passionately.'

'Why?'

'Because the storms of winter are scarcely past, when they break through the wet ground in their lovely purity, speaking of the resurrection of the just.'

CHAPTER II.

TWELVE YARDS OF FLANNEL.

ONE sunny afternoon, Nettie sat, playing in Jack's room. She had a large toy box, filled with wooden figures, representing the different tradesmen of Briton. Butcher, baker and

greengrocer were soon installed in the miniature market. Then with pride she brought forth her choicest treasure. A fish girl dressed in Highland costume. 'You beautiful darling!' she exclaimed, and snatching up a wee basket, put it on her head, and began to sing 'Caller Herring.'

'Hush, hush, child! your brother is sleeping, take up those toys, and go to the nursery.'

'I want to stop here, mamma.'

Mrs. Singleton quietly collected the play-things, and locked up the box.

'I'll tell my Uncle Joe, I will,' sobbed Nettie.

'You are a naughty little girl.'

'No, I am not naughty.'

'Silence! not one word, or you must go to bed.'

'I'll be good; I am good, please do not send me away.'

'Will you sit still?'

'Yes; but may I have your scissors, to cut paper dolls?'

'Now,' mused Nettie, 'I wonder what I can do to punish mamma,' those new toys were so nice; she would not like, to have her pretty things locked up. 'I will cut my curls,' and very soon four locks of hair fell at her feet.

'Oh! child, child,' cried Mrs. Singleton, and bending down she tenderly lifted one of the severed ringlets. Can the reader picture the scene. An old-fashioned room, with diamond-paned windows, a four-posted bedstead, crimson silk hangings, chairs, and wardrobe of carved oak, bouquets of flowers, exquisite engravings, a beautiful woman and a trembling child. The door opened, Mr. Singleton entered, Nettie impulsively covered her forehead.

'What is the matter, pet?' he said.

Her mother pointed to the curls, and requested him to deal with the culprit.

'Why have you cut your hair, Nettie?'

'To vex mamma.'

'So—'

The child glanced slyly at her father, his face was stern and

sorrowful, then gently touching his hand, she continued her confessions. 'Mamma loved them very much, she said they were like yours this morning, and gave me a pile of bon-bons.'

Mr. Singleton cast a glance of keen scrutiny at the juvenile penitent, and thought how pretty she looked. It would be hard to deal severely with such a wee sinner, indeed in his inmost soul he would much rather have acted as counsel for defence. At length he gravely said, 'Come here to me, my daughter, don't be afraid, I will not punish you, nor will I be hard in any case, if you speak truthfully.' Nettie thus encouraged, crept up to her father's side, and received a few tender chiding words; not many, for the little white face was all tear-bedimmed, and after being abundantly kissed, cautioned, and consoled, she was released, and handed over to the care of Nurse Lister, who was a good, simple woman, ignorant of the fashion of the world, but well up in the 'Ten Commandments.' Nettie was her ewe lamb, and if there was a soft corner in Lister's heart, it was for the wilful girl who now laid in her arms sobbing piteously.

'I never knew such a thing, never, a little lady like you, Miss Nettie, to cut her curls. Whatever is to be done when company comes, and your mamma sends for you to go down?'

'Oh! dear.'

'You may well say, Oh! dear. Think of Mrs. Plasket Thompson, she won't say you are pretty now.'

'She will.'

'She won't, nor Mrs. Morrell either. Then there's the Rector, how dreadfully shocked he will be.'

'I do not care for him, no, not a little bit.'

'Supposing your Uncle Joe pops in, what then?'

'He will glue them on.'

'Glue what on?'

'My curls.'

'He could do no such thing, child.'

'Jack will, then.'

'He cannot.'

'You sew them on again, nurse?'

'No.'

'Please do, and I will be so good.'

Lister led her to a mirror, saying, 'Look, what you have done.'

Nettie gazed with dismay at the space left across the forehead. 'Oh! those nasty scissors! I hate them! put them in the fire, Lister! put them in the fire!'

'No use to blame the scissors. It is you who have done wrong.'

'Will Jesus be angry?'

'I fear so.'

'Perhaps He did not see.'

'What text did your papa give you for this year?'

'Thou God seest me.' 'I wish, though, he would shut His eyes when I am naughty.'

Nurse took the child on her knee, and tried to make her comprehend how fearful it would be, were God to turn His face away. She then spoke of Eve's disobedience, and the punishment inflicted.

'But I haven't eat any apples, and God never sent me out of Eden.'

Lister next related the history of Cain and Abel. Nettie listened patiently until the mark was placed on the murderer's brow, then she vehemently exclaimed,

'I haven't killed Jack.'

'No, but you listened to the devil, when you cut your hair.'

Nettie remained a minute silent, then questioned, 'What will grandpapa say?'

'You shall go, and hear in the morning.'

The following day, after an early breakfast, they started for Burnside Lodge. Mr. Osborn welcomed them with a glad smile.

'Dear child,' he said to Nettie, 'I was looking for you, come into the library and rest.' He drew an arm-chair up to the window, and placed his little grand-daughter in it. As he

paced leisurely up and down the room, in his silk robe d'chambre, one could scarcely believe that sixty years had rolled over his head. Tall and broad-chested, his face a study, the brow expansive and almost transparent, dark, brilliant eyes, the contour of lips and chin concealed by heavy moustache and beard. Gazing at him, we instinctively felt that brains and muscle were evenly balanced. The room possessed an indescribable charm, the walls were covered with blue and silver paper, curious old shelves for books extended from floor to ceiling, large fauteuils and chairs were placed so as to afford seats for those who wished to examine the ponderous volumes or MSS. A circular table occupied the centre, and on it was placed an antique vase, filled with choice and fragrant flowers; rich velvet curtains draped the windows, on the marble mantel-piece stood a small French clock in golden case: several statues by Chantry were arranged in recesses, and the apartment in every respect bespoke fastidious taste, and lavish expenditure. Nettie sat still, one little hand shading her scarlet cheeks, until Mr. Osborn inquired,

‘Why are you hiding your face?’

‘Because I am naughty.’

Her grandfather stooped down, took the bonnie head in his hands, turned the features to view, and said, ‘What have you been doing?’

She pointed to her hair, and gave the explanation in a subdued voice.

‘You have done wrong, but it is forgiven, so put on your hat, and I will drive you home.’

Tea was over in the nursery, the children were sewing, or pretending to do so, and Lister had rather a hard time threading needles, and fastening of ends. Presently Mary the housemaid entered, saying, ‘Nurse, you are wanted.’

‘Who is it?’

‘Isaac Robinson.’

‘Tell him I will be down in a minute.’ Lister’s face was radiant, and after ascertaining that her cap-ribbons were in perfect order, she followed Mary to the kitchen.

'This is an unexpected pleasure, Isaac. What has brought you to Kendal?'

'Cloth dyeing.'

'How are all the Pudsey friends?'

'Very well, thank you, Ann. We have had a revival. Alleluiah Tommy's been ovver'd, and t'Spirit were on him. There was sich an a shouting as t'Chapel nivver heard afore.'

'Glory be to God.'

'Hi lass, thou says reet, it's glory be to God. Do'st thou remember Trip Hardcastle, t'cock feighter.'

'Of course.'

'He's brought in. Poor chap, at first he nob'but got a glimmering of leet, and said he felt like a mon fastened i' a hogshead, peeping through t'bung-hoile. T'Rev. Philip Garritt heard o' t'glorious wark, and came to us. Trip was crying for mercy, when he entered t'vestry. Philip knelt down beside t'penitent, and nivver ceased to pray, till t'lad found liberty.'

'You are a messenger of glad tidings.'

'Thou wod say that, if thou cud'st spend a day i' Pudsey ; t'heat of t'holy flame is beginning to be felt i' other places of worship. We hev got a curate now at Farsley, who has a wonderful knowledge of t'Scriptur, saying he's nob'bud a Church Parson.'

Robinson had a deal more home news to relate, and private plans of his own to lay before Lister ; apparently she found them interesting, for her charge upstairs was quite forgotten. Meanwhile the young folks were busily employed. Nettie stood on a four-legged stool beside a table covered with work. Dora, her three years' old sister, was perched in a high chair, and between them rested a pink-lined basket, containing a white mat, and five plump puppies.

'Poor little doggies are naked, and have no pretty frocks,' said Dora.

'It's a shame,' replied Nettie.

'Day'll get cold.'

A bundle of Lister's scarlet flannel laid conveniently to

hand. Nettie's look conveyed a bright idea to Dora, she felt the flannel with her tiny fingers, and lisped, 'Nice and soft for doggies.'

An onset was quickly made, Nettie cut, and Dora sewed, the puppies yelped in shrill treble, while their mother stood on hind legs putting in a few notes of discordant bass.

'We's very dud,' remarked Dora, in a tone of satisfaction.

'Very,' responded Nettie, measuring a black favourite of the male gender. Just at this juncture Lister returned. 'My twelve yards of flannel,' she cried, sweeping the puppies into their bed: she then marshalled children and basket to the library. Mr. Singleton was pouring over a brief he had to defend on the morrow; a man tried for life. Lister's heavy step aroused him from this soul-absorbing subject. He glanced up, his handsome countenance instantly beamed with amusement. 'No case here, nurse,' he exclaimed, 'it is the fruits of Original Sin.'

CHAPTER III.

FEED MY LAMBS.

It was night, and earth reposed under a coverlet of snow, whilst the wintry breeze played a solemn requiem amidst the leafless trees. The streets were silent, even the watchman's tread broke not the hush of the midnight hour, but the rider of the pale horse passed invisibly, and entered Holly Bank. No one saw him, no one felt his chilling touch, excepting Jack Singleton, to whom he spoke, saying, 'The Master calleth thee.'

'Mother.'

'My precious son.' Mrs Singleton knelt down, and pressed Jack's wasted hand to her trembling lips.

‘Has my father returned?’

‘No, love.’

‘Will he be long?’

‘I trust not.’

‘What is the time?’

‘Ten minutes past twelve. Why are you so anxious, darling?’

‘Because I am dying, mother.’

‘Oh! John, my pride, my hope, my only son! I cannot, will not, give you up.’

The large blue eyes unclosed, and gazed at the kneeling woman with a look so full of love and pity, that it might have been a faint reflection of that wondrous one from Calvary’s Lord to Mary.

‘God’s will be done, my mother.’

‘It is so hard, what shall I do without you, Jack?’

‘Have I been a comfort?’

A sob was the only response.

‘Will you give my Bible to father, the locket to Nettie, and the money in the ivory box to the poor?’

‘I will.’

Jack closed his eyes, and Mrs. Singleton struggled to regain composure. She was a true nurse, a born, ‘not a made one,’ but this was a severe test of Christian faith and nerval power, and who can marvel that tears came with a rush like water from Undine’s unlocked well. She prayed and wept, until Jack again questioned.

‘Has my father come?’

‘Not yet; he would leave Carlisle at eleven.’

‘Does he come by rail?’

‘Not all the way; he will drive from Shap, rather than wait for the Glasgow train.’

‘Mother, there is one thing I desire, and father will, I think, procure it for me.’

‘What is it, dear?’

‘Holy Communion.’

A spasm of agony flashed across Mrs. Singleton's face as she replied, 'You are, I fear, too young.'

'But Christ said, "Feed my lambs."'

'You are not confirmed.'

'Does that matter, mother?'

Mrs. Singleton went to a small stand table, took up a prayer book, and read, 'And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.'

'I am willing, but I cannot go to the Bishop. Yet a greater Bishop than he summons me to-night.'

'Christ will feed you, darling.'

'Yes, mother, when I reach home, but the valley of the shadow of death is to pass through first. I wonder if it will be very dark?'

'Are you afraid?'

'No, only a little; the grave lies before me, Holy Communion would give me strength, I long so much to partake of that Heavenly bread.'

'And you shall, my boy, God being my helper.' Mrs. Singleton turned, and saw her husband, standing. He had entered unnoticed, but a glance told her this sorrow had fallen upon him with impetuous force.

'Father, come nearer, it is so dark, I cannot see you, lift me up! There, that is nice, your hold is firm.'

'You were speaking when I entered about Holy Communion. Do you earnestly wish to receive?'

'Yes; very much.'

'I will go, then, for Mr. Wallace. Mary, ring for Lister! she must remain with you until I return.'

'Please, father, do not ask mother to do that, pleaded Jack: I want to be alone with her.'

'Send Thomas to the Rectory.'

'No love, I had better go myself.'

Mrs. Singleton commenced her last watch. She neither spoke nor wept, fearing to disturb the holy peace that filled the

heart of her dying boy. Jack was a brave sufferer, not one word of complaint was uttered, he laid perfectly still, his fair curls were brushed away from the face, his lips moved in prayer, and the hands were clasped tightly over his mother's. At last, with a look of celestial radiance, he said,

'I am sorry to leave you, mother, but heaven is so bright, for Jesus of Galilee is there. I no longer fear the grave. Did you not tell me last night that a sainted writer once said, "Christ took light into the tomb, and left it shining there."'

Steps were heard on the stairs, Mr. Singleton and the Rector entered, the mother welcomed them with a silent grasp of the hand.

'Let us pray,' said Mr. Wallace: and kneeling down, he began the Visitation Service, then followed a few questions, and after them the Communion for the Sick. The bread was given, and the cup placed to the lips, but whilst he pronounced the Divine words, 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee;' the Rector noticed a change pass over Jack, he sunk back upon the pillows. 'Thanks be to God,' was murmured, and without one struggle he went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

About an hour after, Nettie was aroused by Lister opening a drawer.

'Is it time to get up?' she asked.

'Not yet.' Ann's eyes were red with weeping.

'Does your head ache, nurse?'

'No, dear.'

'Why are you crying?'

'Because Master Jack is gone.'

The child started bolt upright, exclaiming, 'Where is Jack? tell me this minute! this very minute!'

Lister tossed down the linen, and hid her face in the folds of the quilt.

Nettie regarded the usually stoical woman with bewilderment, then put out her hands, and tried to lift the bowed head. 'Are you ill, dear Lister?'

‘No, Miss Nettie.’

‘Then why are you crying?’

‘You must not mind me, pet, I am only a servant, and perhaps have no right to do so, but Master John was my own nursling, and to think of him laid yonder, cold and stiff, breaks my heart.’

‘Where has he gone?’

‘To the New Jerusalem.’

‘Where is that?’

‘Above the sky.’

‘I do not believe he has,’ replied Nettie, with decision.

‘Lie down, child, and go to sleep!’

‘No; stay with me, I want to talk.’

‘I cannot, your mamma requires me. Be a good girl, I will come back soon.’

Nettie could not sleep, strange thoughts filled her mind, she stepped suddenly out of her crib, crossed the landing, and softly crept into Jack’s room. It was draped in white, the bed looked cold and desolate. She ventured to the side. ‘Jack!’ she whispered, ‘Wake up!’ then climbed on to a chair, raised the cambric handkerchief, held her breath, and gazed at her brother’s marble features. A look of terror flashed across her face as she touched the cold, stiff brow, but the momentary repugnance passed, passion took its place, bounding to the floor, she caught hold of the sheet, and cried, ‘Speak, Jack, or I will tell mamma!’ The tick of the timepiece was the only response. Again and again she called, then raising one foot, gave an impatient stamp, exclaiming, ‘I want my brother, and God shall not have him.’ In her rebellion she stood an atom of creation dictating to the God of the universe. Presently with a low wailing cry her head sunk on a satin cushion. How long it rested there, she knew not, for all became dark; when consciousness returned, she found herself warmly wrapped in a Scotch plaid, and nestled in Uncle Joe’s arms. ‘Poor little mourner,’ he murmured, ‘you have drunk prematurely of earth’s bitter draught.’

'Uncle,' she questioned, 'what is to do with Jack? will he never speak again?'

'He is resting, my darling, and has ceased to suffer.'

Nettie thought for a moment, then whispered under her breath, 'He is not gone.'

'Jack is now with Jesus, pet.'

'He is upstairs, uncle, but very cold.'

'Your brother must be cold, for his soul has gone.'

'Who took it?'

'An angel.'

'What is a soul? I have never seen one.'

Her uncle pointed to a bird cage, saying, 'Supposing I open that door, what will your canary do?'

'Fly away.'

'Would the cage go also?'

'No.'

'So it is with man, love. The body is the cage, the soul the spirit, and without the soul the body goes to dust.'

'All to dust?'

'Not all; but you are too young to understand this yet.'

Tears began to flow afresh. 'Tell me,' she pleaded with impassioned vehemence, 'what they will do with my Jack?'

Joe Osborn was no theologian, still in plain, simple words, he tried to teach the faith of the resurrection. Nettie listened and believed; for it is an undoubted fact that a little child, when told of God's goodness never asks for explanations, but folds its hands, and seems without one devious thought to recognize the Author of all Mercies. Not till modern theology opens its labyrinth of dogmas is the way to heaven seen less clearly.

In a few days Jack was buried. The funeral was simple and without parade. Schoolfellows carried him to the grave, and scattered fair, white flowers over the coffin. Mrs. Singleton felt she could shed no more bitter tears; the hour for grief was past, her boy's sufferings were ended, and his

pure spirit enjoying perfect bliss in the smile of Him who, when on earth, said 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.'

Nettie's grandfather noticed her pale, troubled face, so persuaded his daughter to allow Lister to come with the children for a time to Burnside. The young folks were wild with delight, for they knew there would be unlimited supplies of bon-bons and sweet things.

'Shall we go to Acre-rigg and see the peacocks?' enquired Nettie one bright morning.

'Oh, do let us, chimed in Dora; I does want a pretty feather.'

They went, but no birds were visible. 'Lazy things,' pouted Nettie.

'It is too cold for them,' said Lister.

'I hate nasty peacocks,' whined Dora, beginning to cry.

Lister gave her a little shake, saying 'You must be good, Miss, or I will take you in.'

Dora's tempers were like hurricanes. She threw herself upon the ground, and commenced to scream hysterically.

'What's all this about?' exclaimed a gentleman, coming up a private path.

Lister curtsied, and explained the children's disappointment.

'So that is the way you take trouble, is it, my lady?' said he, lifting her up. Dora was ashamed, but still continued to stamp and kick.

'I presume these are Mr. Osborn's grandchildren?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Come here, child, and let me see who you are like.'

'Miss Nettie is the picture of her papa, and Dora resembles her mamma, sir.'

'Not at present, I think. When I knew Mrs. Singleton she had beautiful dark eyes: that little girl's are spoiled with crying.'

'Dora does not often fret,' interposed Nettie, eagerly.

'I am glad to hear it. Come, promise to be good, and I will take you to see my birds.'

'Does they belong to you? may we go dis minute?'

'I must fetch the key, but will be back presently.'

Nettie soon grew tired of feather picking, so slipped away to the river. A lad was fishing. She went up to him and said, 'Have you caught any fish?'

The boy was in tatters, but possessed a good open face. He smiled, and pointed to a fine trout in his basket.

'May I take it in my hand?' she asked.

'Yes, Miss, if you wish.'

She lifted it, paused for a second, then raised one arm. There was a splash, and the fish sunk beneath the water.

The lad sprung to his feet. 'Oh! little lady,' he cried; 'why have you done that? My mother is ill, and I wanted the trout for her supper.'

'Buy another,' responded Nettie.

'I have no money. Father's dead, and we are very poor.'

'Catch one then, there's a good boy.'

He looked sorrowfully at the river. 'No use trying; live fish won't come near dead ones.'

'I am sorry; please forgive me, and I will bring you my silver penny.'

The angler took up his basket, and casting a resentful and half-admiring glance at her, exclaimed 'If you were a boy I'd drub you, but I can't thrash a girl.'

Nettie lifted her long silken lashes, revealing a pair of blue eyes brilliant with passion.

The lad felt he had been a coward to use such language, and though barefoot and clothed in rags apologized with the grace of a lord. It would have been difficult for Nettie to have defined under what impulse she had acted. Was it to deliver the fish, or sheer mischief? Anyway it brought a bitter sting. The troubled face of the widow's son, and his words 'my mother is ill,' haunted her for months. She stole frequently to the place, with a treasured

half-crown in her hand, to pay for the trout, but the fisher-lad came not. Time often fails to obliterate the remembrance of spots left on the white page of childhood ; and the sins of early life often look darker, and weigh heavier than the greater ones of mature years.

CHAPTER IV.

EVE'S DAUGHTER.

ONE bright February afternoon Mrs. Singleton sat at the drawing-room window, in a low rocking chair, with hands folded. Her eyes were fixed on a bank of lovely snow-drops, but her thoughts were far away. A foot sounded on the gravel walk. She looked up, and saw a man approaching in ragged coat and battered hat : in his arms he carried an infant. A mist gathered before her sight. She uttered a cry, half of pain and half of pleasure. The windows opened to the ground : she stepped out, and holding forth her hand gasped, 'William.'

'Mary !' The man's eyes were like burning coal, the woman's dim with tears.

'Where have you been all these years, my brother?'

'In an earthly hell.'

Mrs. Singleton clasped the thin, emaciated hand more tightly, and said, 'The air is chilly, let us go in.'

Osborn cast a quick look at his clothes and exclaimed, 'No, take the child ! It is mine, Mary, I have walked with it from London !'

She kissed and nestled the little creature closer to her breast.

William looked earnestly at the child ; then, in a broken voice pleaded, 'be kind to him.'

'I will; but why linger out here. See, he has gone to sleep.'

'Are you alone?'

'I am.'

'Where is Gilbert?'

'On Circuit.'

'They went in. Osborn stood for some minutes silent, then drew a small bottle from his pocket; 'Have you a glass in the room?' he asked.

'What is that?'

'Laudanum. It is my best friend, for it stills pain, deadens remorse, and subdues the pangs of hunger. I need it, for I have tasted no food for forty hours.'

'I will ring for some immediately.' William sprang up. 'Stop,' he cried. 'Remember, no one must know I am here to-day. I will not brook the sneers of servants.'

'Will you permit me to send for father?'

'My father? No, by Jupiter, unless you wish me to blow my brains out; for I swear I will not face him.'

Mrs. Singleton put her arm gently round his neck, and said in a soft, coaxing tone, 'No one shall serve you but myself. I will have a room on the third story prepared, and in a few days you will feel rested.'

'Rested, how can that be? My heart is breaking.'

'Who has caused your grief?'

'My wife.'

'Your wife?'

'Ah, Mary, how I worshipped that woman.' Do you remember Swimburne's lines?

"Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not May."

She was very beautiful, and in an unlucky hour I determined to marry her. You know my father disapproved of the union. Lucy, of course, went constantly into Society, and before six months had passed I found that I had

made a fatal mistake. She did not love me, and had simply married for an establishment. Recklessly improvident, she rushed into the wildest excesses : when I tried to restrain she rebelled, and without my knowledge carried on a flirtation with a former lover. Mowbery was a good looking, conceited, heartless, frivolous, and dissipated scamp. He belonged to that class of young men who throng our cities, and manage to live fashionably by the gaming table. I forbid him the house. Lucy grew frantic, cursing the hour of her marriage, and I firmly believe became insane. Terrible rage drove me to desperation ; and to make matters worse, a report reached me that her mother had died in a lunatic asylum. I flew to drink and the race-course, together we squandered a fortune : staked and lost at the gaming table Lucy's diamonds. Her pearl necklace was worth five hundred. I kept it as a reserve anchor ; meaning, when all else was gone, to ask her to sell this costly ornament. But debts of honour accumulated rapidly. I became desperate : money must be got at any risk. One day Lucy was out, I suspected, with Mowbery ; and mad with jealousy, I broke open her jewel box and rushed off with the necklace. I imagine I must have looked what I felt—a maniac ; for the shopman evidently attributed my perturbation to adverse circumstances. “ You wish to sell, I suppose ? ” he enquired. I replied in the affirmative. He opened the case and tested the gems, then returned the box to me, saying “ I decline to purchase.” “ What do you mean ? ” I cried. “ Simply, what you termed pearls are imitations.” It instantly flashed to my mind that my wife had sold the real gems, and like a true daughter of Eve replaced them with false ones. I know not what became of the case ; for I remember nothing until I found myself on the brink of the Thames. The reflected moon and stars glittered on the surface of the gliding stream, “ but my heart was black, for I had worshipped Hell's Trinity : women, wine, and play.” I raved at Lucy, cursed her des-

troyer, and called aloud for death. The rippling of the water was as music to my over-strung nerves : then came temptation, "One plunge, one struggle, and I should be free." I stepped backward and prepared to leap, when a man's strong hand grasped my arm, and a voice like an angel's exclaimed, "What do you seek, my brother?" "Death," I growled, struggling to free myself from his hold. "Let me go, or we die together." "Then we die," was the calm response. There was something so soft, yet firm, in the tone that it arrested me for a moment, and in that moment I was saved. Reason returned. I looked at my deliverer : he was young and superbly handsome. We spoke not for some minutes. Then he broke the silence by denouncing, in impassioned language, the sin of suicide. I listened, and a strange peace crept over me : passion was subdued, and despair fled. "No path," he continued to urge, "is so dark but what it may be brightened by sympathy. Let me be your friend to night." "Nay," I responded, "you are angelic, I demoniac. What bond can there be between us two? I must refuse your offered kindness." "Then good night," he said, "I trust we shall meet again."

'Have you ever seen him since?' interposed Mrs. Singleton.

'Never! but I should recognize that God-like face were I to see it at the Antipodes.'

'What afterwards occurred?'

'A hideous nightmare; and I cannot yet realize Lucy as a fallen woman. I have seen her gamble, but thank God not intoxicated.'

'She used to dislike wine.'

A bitter smile curled Osborn's lips. 'I tell you, Mary,' he responded, 'the licentious indulgence of women in these days is headlong and limitless. Once I fancied I could save my wife, but every effort failed : she cringed from me, and clung to Mowbery. During this miserable time our two children died : their death estranged us still further.

Here his voice faltered, and he dropped his head to veil the anguish that convulsed his features.

‘You say insanity is in her family.’

‘It is, and our third babe was born in a private asylum. For twelve months I watched anxiously, trusting if reason returned, she would be a better woman. Eight weeks more rolled over: she was pronounced sane. Our home was broken up so I took her to lodgings, and waited on her with loving care. How I found the means to live I scarcely know, for money, plate, and furniture were gone; but she stayed contentedly with me, so I was happy. This lull was only temporary. Mowbery was on our track, and came like a black shadow across my path. I knew the danger, and to save her from utter ruin parted with the last relic I possessed, and sailed at once to Malta. He followed, and just after Russell was born they met. She fled with the villain, and took my child also. Mad with rage I once more drunk of “that which garrisons hell, and makes earth to groan.” “Alcohol is Satan’s panacea,” and I partook of that anæsthetic remedy until stricken down with fever. Rochefoucauld tells us “There are people fated to be fools,” but bitter indeed the inward reproach when conscious that you have made one of yourself. I regained strength slowly, for an iron hand seemed to grasp my heart. One night, as I sat beside the fire thinking of you, I heard a knock, went to the door, and found a child on the steps. A note was pinned to his cloak, which contained these words “He is your’s, keep him.” I received my boy as a token of God’s compassion, and vowed to lead a new life; raised sufficient money to pay my passage, but landed in England a homeless, penniless wanderer.’

‘Not homeless William, Gilbert and I will never desert you. Where is Lucy?’

‘In Spain, with Mowbery. I should like to stay a few days with you, Mary: to rest would be Paradise.’

‘Stop, dear, as long as you wish.’

'If I remain, no one must know.'

'Excepting Gilbert. I must tell him.'

'Why so?'

'He is my husband.'

'Then I go.'

'Would you cause the first deception, William? Believe me, a wife should be to her husband in all things true, and pure as a snowflake.'

'Do as you wish regarding Gilbert, but I dare not face my father.'

'At present you are weary, rest awhile before we decide what is the best for you.'

Some two or three days elapsed, then Osborn discovered that Nature's penalties for the violation of her laws are heavy. Suffering from severe mental depression, he needed all the watchful care woman's love bestows. With the exception of the Rector, all visitors were excluded. Mrs. Singleton therefore proposed that a doctor should be consulted. But her brother became agitated immediately the subject was named. On entering the drawing-room one evening, she found Mr. Wallace waiting for her. Dora was on his knee, and Nettie perched on the arm of a chair.

'I have been asking when the Pudsey trip comes off,' he said.

'Next week, I presume.'

'Miss Nettie evidently expects a good time, but what is this about Dora?'

'Lister will not undertake the responsibility of that naughty little girl.'

'Never mind, poppet, you shall go with me to the Rectory, and ride old Bill.'

'Will you play at "Blind Man's Buff," like papa?'

'Yes, pet.'

'Den you may go to Yorkshire, Nettie, with nasty Lister. I will ride the pony, and make Mr. Wallace jump me up all the day.'

'Come off to the garden, children,' said their mother, 'and mind, Dora, you don't tread on the flower beds.'

'How is Osborn?' enquired the Rector.

'No better.'

'I popped in to mention that I have two gentlemen staying with me, one is your old friend, Dean Hartley, the other Doctor Hazlehurst, of Leeds.'

A gleam of hope radiated her countenance. 'Do you think William will consent to see him?' she questioned.

'We must make him, for if any man can save your brother, it is he.'

'Will you go up stairs?'

'If convenient.'

Mrs. Singleton led the way, saying, 'My husband is with our invalid, he too will be glad to see you.'

'How are you to-night, William? do you feel like eating half-a-dozen partridges?'

'Miserable, Rector.'

'Why, Osborn, you are trembling all over: what is to do?'

'I am cold.'

'Cold! beside that fire! how would you exist amongst the Cumberland Fells. I have just returned from the Ruri-Decanal Chapter, and have a clerical story to tell you. The Bishop of Carlisle was opening a Church last Thursday in one of the small Fellside parishes, and finding it extremely cold during the service, took the clerk to task, saying, "My good man, the Church was very cold this morning."'

'The heating apparatus wasn't leeted, for the sexton wasn't there.'

'Why did you not light it yourself?'

'One offish is suffishient for ony man; I's clerk, ye need na complain, hoo-ever, for ye had a het water bottle till yer feet i' t' pilpot.'

'So if a bottle of warm water was considered enough for his Lordship, what would you do?'

'The Cumberland people,' interposed Mr. Singleton, 'are

a brave, hardy, independent race.' It strikes me that the Bishop received better treatment from the Fell clerk than Hugh Latimer did ; who relates, that once when travelling from London to Worcester he sent word over night to a town that he would preach there in the morning. It was a holiday, and the good Bishop esteemed preaching holiday work, and he candidly records, "I thought I should have found a great company ; but instead, the door of the church was fast locked, and it took half an hour to find the key. 'Sir,' said a parishioner, 'it is a busy day. We cannot hear you preach ; for we want to go abroad and gather for Robin Hood.'"

'I wonder if Latimer appreciated his reception,' said Osborn, who had evinced interest in the anecdotes.

'He called it a weeping matter that an outlaw's memory should be preferred to his ministry.'

Mr. Wallace bid good night, and said 'I will bring my friend, Mr. Hazlehurst, to see you.'

Next morning Osborn was lounging in a large chair before his bedroom fire, when the noise of carriage wheels produced a feeling of languid curiosity. Presently Mrs. Singleton glided in, and softly whispered 'Doctor Hazlehurst, my dear.' He lifted his colourless face, with its bloodshot eyes, and sprung to his feet exclaiming, 'My saviour, my deliverer.'

Mrs. Singleton stood for a moment, spell bound, gazing at the two men. John Hazlehurst was worth looking at, for he was handsome enough to match Apollo : benevolence was stamped on his features, and all who approached him felt as if an angel had passed and left a benediction. Mrs. Singleton spoke first : she was flushed with pleasure, and tears fell like raindrops. 'I thank you with my whole heart,' she said.

Mr. Hazlehurst cut short all further acknowledgments by saying, 'Madam I did nothing at all ; I feel myself honoured to have served you : ' then bowing, courteously added, 'I perceive your brother is excited. May we be left alone?'

CHAPTER V.

'TRIP,' AND THE DEVIL.

'THIS is Leeds, Miss Nettie,' said Lister, as the train entered Wellington Station.

'Where are we going nurse?'

'To the Trevelyan Hotel. I dare say you are tired.'

'I am very hungry.'

'Here! young man, this way,' called Lister to a porter.

'I want you to attend to this luggage.'

'Take your time, mother, I will see to it in a bit.' Lister went scarlet. The word mother implied age, and that was Ann's weak point. 'You must attend to me,' she replied with asperity.

'All right, missis,' and with a merry laugh he shouldered the boxes.

'Mind that trunk, it is mine,' cried Lister, touching one covered with a gay wrapper.

'Guessed as much, old lady. Where must I carry them?'

'To a cab.'

In a few minutes Lister and her charge were in Boar-lane.

'Did papa bid you bring me here?' inquired the child.

'Yes, pet.'

'Shall I see Uncle Joe?'

'Your mamma said she had written to him, but Mr. Joe Osborn is not to depend on.'

'Must we stay here all night?'

'Oh! no. We are going on to Pudsey.'

'How shall we get there?'

'Wait and see, Chatterbox.'

'Perhaps Uncle Joe will drive us in his pretty new carriage?'

'Bless my life, Miss, you are always thinking and talking about your Uncle Joe.'

'He is so good.'

'Good,' sneered Lister; 'about as good as Lucifer.'

'Who is Lucifer?'

'No one you know. Have you finished your dinner?'

'Yes, thanks.'

'Then lie down on the sofa, and I will take a turn and see after things.'

'May I stand at the window?'

'If you wish; but rest a little first. Kate, the waitress, has promised me to stay with you.' Lister arranged her dress with unusual care, and set off to the Cloth Hall to find Robinson. A group of business men were holding a debate in the yard. Isaac was amongst them. 'Love is magic, its influence electric, and with strong, unexplainable power, binds monarch, peasant, and laughing girl alike. Robinson stepped forward, took her hand into his, and whispered, 'My dear lass.'

Ann dropped her eyelids to veil the joy that beamed beneath, and murmured 'I thought I would find thee here lad.'

Cupid's work was done, Isaac forgot cloth, discussion, and everything, except the woman at his side; at last, she broke the spell by asking,

'How are all at home?'

'Very well, but thou hast comed a day sooner nor they expected, thi mother hes been rare, and busy all t'week, we killed t'pig this morning, sho thought ye would fancy a bit after t'journey, but I doubt it waint be cut up yet, never heed, though, there'l be a grand supper of t'fry; (cooked with onions and a dab of mustard,) t'owd woman is a top hand at mashing tates, and macking a savery pudding. I's flaid thou'l fend t'house all of a mess, they hev been scrubbing t'floors, and weshing t'chene dogs, and t'other jome horniments; t'candle-

sticks are polished as breet as a mahogany kist o' drawers. Betty Murggy hez pottery-moulded all t'flegs i' t'front of t'door-way, and thee faather, to show respect, hez wared 5s. on a bit ov bran new carpet for t'bedside, last Friday he bought a great jug and basin o' Bill Taylor, t'pot-hawking man, to clean thee sen i' t'mornings when thou gets up, like t'quality does. An I tell thee there nivver wur sich an a stir made afore at owd Dont Listers.'

Ann was radiant with delight. 'What time do you start for Pudsey?' she asked.

'Three o'clock.'

'Hast t'wagon here?'

'For sure.'

'Thou'll give Miss Nettie and I a lift?'

'I sud think soa,' he answered, with undisguised pleasure.

'You must call for us, then, at the Trevelyan.'

'That's raather a fine place, but I'll do thee bidding.'

At the appointed hour, Isaac drove to the Hotel, Nettie clapped and danced with delight, when Robinson hoisted her on to a bale of cloth, and put a large paper bag into her hands.

'What have you there, Isaac?'

'Nuts, Ann, to keep t'bairn i' toit, whilst thee an me hev a few words i' season.'

The old white horse trotted along leisurely, stopping occasionally to cast wistful looks towards the scant herbage growing by the roadside. Several miles were pleasantly gone over when two men came in sight.

'Yon's Alleluia Tommy and Trip Hardcastle,' exclaimed Robinson, 'they're on t'road to a meeting, I'll lay a shilling.'

'Good day, Isaac. How is t'Lord dealing wi' thee?' asked the eldest man.

'Graciously, Tommy, varry graciously.'

'Amen, lad, amen!'

'This is Ruth's daughter,' remarked Robinson.

Tommy looked at Ann earnestly. 'Young woman,' he questioned, 'are you Canaan bound?'

‘ I am.’

‘ Praise the Lord ; but there are allurements i’ this world, are ye armed against t’flesh and t’devil ?’

‘ Nature’s weak.’

‘ That’s true, but grace abounds, thou moant be cast down, lass. There’s Trip, he’s allus feighting wi’ t’devil, and bless t’Lord, he comes off conqueror.’

‘ I do that, Tommy; nobbut this morning, I and t’owd enemy hed a confab together.’

Ann bent eagerly forward, and Robinson exclaimed, ‘ What did he say to thee, Trip ? what did he say to thee ? ’

‘ Trip scratched his head, as a prelude to his experience, and commenced, ‘ I hed just gotten out ov bed, and wur pulling on my stockings, when somebody whispered reet i’ my ear, “ dunnot go to t’meeting this efternoon.” I jumped on my feet, and called out at t’top o’ my voice, ‘ What for ? ’

‘ Thou’ll lose a lot of brass, singing and praying weant pay like cock feighting.’ ‘ Weant they ?’ says I. He coom a bit nearer to me, reet be t’hearthstun, and said, “ That gown ov yuhr Sally’s is fair i’ rags, and bairns’ shoon are clouted all ovver, thou ought to do summat else nor waste thee time at t’chapel. Dicky White is bawn to play a knur match on Baildon Moor i’ t’morning, thee go wi’ him.” Now I like Dick uncommon well, we allus wur mates, I felt t’temptation creeping into my heart, bud I looked upward.’

‘ Amen, Trip ! ’ shouted Tommy, exultingly, ‘ tell us how thou triumphed.’

‘ I walked to t’door, open’d it wide, and said, “ Thou owd hypocrite, I hev no time to lake wi’ thee.” Ye sud hev seen t’owd chap put his tail atween his legs, and sneak out ov t’house.’

‘ What did thou do next, Trip ? ’

‘ I went reet on my knees, it wur cheeky wark, ye mind, turning Satan out, after been acquainted wi’ him soa mony years.’

'It is fair grand to hear thee talk,' said Tommy, 'but thou sud hev sung,

"The devil and me, we can't agree.
I don't like him, and he doesn't like me."

When he ceased, Isaac offered to make room for them on the wagon.

'We thank thee, Robinson, but our way lies t'other road.'

'When are ye coming to Pudsey?'

'On Lovefeast Sunday. Give our respects to Ruth; tell her we keep on praying for Dont's conversion.'

The journey was a pleasant one, and ere sundown Ann arrived at Pudsey. As they neared Lister's house a clock struck the hour, at intervals of a quarter of a minute.

'T'owd machine stopped this morning, so thee faather, I reckon, is putting on it reet,' remarked Isaac in an explanatory tone. He then leaped from the wagon, and shouted, 'Hi! there.'

Mrs. Lister answered the call. She was a ruddy-faced woman, and wore a blue cotton dress covered with a multitude of golden moons, the gown pinned well up at the back, displayed stockings, shoes, and patten clogs; a mop cap, stiffly starched, and a red silk handkerchief, completed her costume. She saw Ann and rushed forward, exclaiming,

'Thou's welcome, my lass; thou's welcome. Dont come thee here lad!'

'What's to doa Ruth? I'm capped at thee makking sich an a din.'

'Our Ann's coomed.'

'Our Ann, and thee not done fettling, nor t' pig cuttun up.'

'Ne'er heed, t' fry is fair grand; come thee ways in joy, there's a chair for thee by t' chimley neuk.'

'Who's that?' questioned Lister, as Isaac lifted Nettie from her woollen throne.

'Miss Singleton.'

'Miss Singleton, is it ; why, poor bairn, thou mun be stormed. Tak her in and clap her down on t'hearthstun, Robinson. I'll goa and fend a wishen to set her on !' Dont and Nettie soon became friends.

'Wur ye stoled coming to Pudsey?' he asked.

'Beg pardon, but what does stoled mean?'

'Tired, joy.'

'I was very cold.'

Lister lifted the child on to his knee, and pulled off her boots. The firelight revealed to perfection his stern, cute features, checked smock, and white night cap ; rows of shining pans glistened on the kitchen walls, and showed to advantage besides the old oak panels. In one corner stood an eight-days' clock in a painted case, said to be the oldest in the parish. The fire-place was large, and on the high mantle shelf were displayed brass candlesticks, china dogs, and an ancient sword. There was a cupboard, partly fronted with glass, so that its treasures of antique china, quaint decanters, and wine glasses, might be exposed to the public view. A comfortable deal settle stood on one side of the fire, an arm chair on the other, with a little handy, round table, that could conveniently be moved. Bright coloured plates and dishes adorned the polished dresser ; the window looked gay, with pots of old-fashioned flowers, and a white lilac tree grew just outside the porch, in which hung milk pails and measures. The wind suddenly arose, and swept in great gusts around the house, but little heed paid Nettie or the shepherd dog to the storm, for they were both asleep on the rug before the blazing fire. The clock struck seven, a door banged and re-opened with a clatter, arousing the sleepers. Mrs. Lister came in to dish up supper. Robinson of course remained, and fully appreciated both fry and savory pudding. Nettie had a fine time, and pronounced Pudsey cheesecakes to be the best ever made.

'I hope it will be fair for t' little lass to-morrow,' said Dont, graciously.

'I trust so,' responded Ann: 'we mean to spend the afternoon at Fulneck.'

'Moind thou dosn't leave thee heart behind thee,' whispered Isaac, slyly.

'Hev done talking balderdash, an' tak thee sen off for to neet,' growled Lister.

Early next morning neighbours begun to drop in, anxious to see Ann and hear Kendal news. Dont exhibited with pride two silk pocket handkerchiefs, flannel night shirts, and a pound of bird's-eye tobacco. 'Our Ann, thou knows Jacob, is a gud lass, sho nivver forgets her owd faather.'

'Nor t' mother that bore her,' chimed in Mrs.. Lister, going to the cupboard.

'That's reet, Ruth; bring out t'cleet and a bit of seed loaf for t' wemen. Jacob and I will hev some ale, and a slice of caw'd beef,' exclaimed Dont.

'Weant thou hev a drop of cleet?' questioned Ruth persuasively.

'Noa lass! teetotal muckment weant do for me.'

'Try some Kendal clapcake, father, to your meat, it's very nice,' said Ann.

'I will that, for I know it's prime.'

'This cleet is fust rate,' interposed Mary Brooke.

'It's last year's,' added Ruth.

'I nivver tasted better,' said Miss Udall, or 'dress-making Bell!' as she was generally termed.

'Thou owt to know t' worth of t' wine, if ony body i' Pudsey does,' cried Dont, becoming talkative under the influence of XX beer, 'for thou art allus gad'ding off to t'Hall. It caps me reet what they fend thee to do up there. Greet folk mun ware a sight of brass on new clothes. If I wur t' gaffer, I'd mak a turn ovver.'

'I hev worn my Sunday cooat these twenty years, and Peg allus warks for her own donings,' said Jacob.

'Ruth's gotton what, I lay, will last her to t'grave,' responded Dont, with evident pride. It isn't ivvery mother as hez sich

an a dowter : bring thee duds out lass, an let aar friends see what aaset of presents aar Ann brought frea Kendal.'

'What a grand shawl,' exclaimed Bathsheba Paley: 'it's real Paisley. How much did it cost, Ann?'

'This silk: what a rich black. Is there twelve yards?' inquired Miss Udall.

'Twelve and a half,' replied Ann.

'You must have it made for t' Lovefeast Mrs. Lister; t'skirt will look uncommon well with a flounce.'

'Stop, Bell!' thundered Dont, bringing his hand down on the table with a force that made every glass jingle. 'Mak that dress decent, and I'll pay; flounce or bunch my wife, and thou shan't touch a brass farthing.'

When Dont declared his will it was as the Law of Medes and Persians, and Ruth knew implicit obedience would be enforced. Bell wisely changed the subject by remarking, 'I think I'll be going.'

'Tak thee time; don't be so huffy. I meant noa offence thou understands, and that's plenty. Now, Ann lass, shaw them grand skins thou brought thee mother.'

'Furs you mean, father, they are Mrs. Singleton's gift.'

'Yes,' said Ruth, 'sho sent me this here muff and victorine in memory of Master Jack.'

'Doa they wear mony sich commodities i' those parts?' questioned Bathsheba.

'Of course,' replied Bell, 'it's allus cold in Westmoreland.'

'For sure,' cried Peggy, 'I seed a picture i' t' Methodee Missionary Notice t'last Cerstmas, that made my heart wark, ye moind.'

'What wur it about?' asked Dont.

'Frozen folk, rolled up i' wild beasts' skins, and hugged about wi' nanny goats, poor things.'

'Get out, Peg,' exclaimed Jacob, 'them there wur Lapland heathens.'

'I care now't who they wur,' retorted the woman, 'Lapland and Westmoreland is all t'same, they are akin and braid one ov t'other.'

A hot discussion arose. Peg bravely held her ground, and vehemently declared 'sho hadn't been to far off parts, and didn't mean to goa, bud sho had seen t'pictur, and that wur plenty for ony Christian.'

'But my Ann hez been to Westmoreland, and sho tells me its a bonnie place.'

'Yar Ann,' sneered Peggy.

'What maks thee gainsay her, I'd loike to know.'

'Isaac Robinson has been,' chimed in Bell.

'Isaac Robinson and Ann Lister are both foils, and ye sud tak no gorm of them.'

'Then thou believes that Methodee book afore my lass?'

'I do that, and so wod thou, Dont, if thou warn't an owd reprobate.'

'I nivver heard sich an a din,' exclaimed Jacob, 'thou's maddling, Peg. Come hoome, thee loom's standing, and I lay Ann's waiting to don hersen for Fulneck.'

CHAPTER VI.

OWNING HER WEAKNESS.

RUTH stood one Saturday evening surveying with evident pride a long table spread with snowy napkins, and rows of lovefeast bread.

'What nice loaves,' exclaimed Ann, 'has baking tired you mother?'

'Noa, lass, thou knaws it's a great privilege to mak that bread. Did'st thou bring thee class ticket?'

'Yes.'

'Let's leuk at it.'

Ann handed her a small tin box, saying, 'I have kept them all.'

‘Frae t’ first?’

‘I believe so.’

‘What a grand seet, it fair does me heart gud, lass, to see t’ proof of thee ten years’ membership.’

‘Who leads to-morrow?’

‘Mr. Fletcher’s planned, he’s stopping i’ Shipley wi’ Squire Denby.’

‘I shall be glad to hear him again.’

‘A seet of foaks will be that besides thee, he’s a deal thowt on i’ Pudsey ye moind.’

‘Tommy and Trip said they would come; what do you think of Hardcastle’s conversion?’

‘Trip’s a fine Christian, Ann, nobbut a bit comical, he’s rare manifestations, thou sud hev been i’ t’chapel t’ neet he found liberty, bud noa doubt he’ll tell of it hissen, to-morrow.’

‘May I go and hear him?’ asked Nettie.

‘Noa, love, thou mun stop wi’ Dont.’

‘Are those nice loaves for the feast?’

‘Hi! joy.’

‘And the iced cake, that nurse made?’

‘Noa, that’s for t’ friends that’s bawn to coom to tea.’

Sunday dawned bright and sunny, Isaac dined with the Lister’s, and escorted Ann and her mother to chapel. Dont watched them out of sight; then, turning to Nettie, said—

‘Soa Ann wudn’t tak thee to t’lovefeast, joy?’

‘No, Dont.’

‘Sho deserves hiding; but ne’er heed, I’ll tak gud care of thee.’

‘I went to class-meeting last Thursday.’

Dont’s face puckered as he inquired—‘Didst’ like it?’

‘A little.’

‘What did they doa?’

‘Sing and pray.’

‘Owt else?’

‘Tell experiences.’

‘Who spoke?’

‘Brothers and sisters.’

‘Humph! what did my wife say; owt about me joy?’

‘She said you troubled her mich.’

Lister laughed, went off to the dairy, and returned carrying the iced cake, a jar of strawberry jam, and jug of luscious cream. Now, Miss Nettie,’ he triumphantly exclaimed, ‘We’ll hod a lovefeast.’

‘Ann will be cross if you cut that cake, Dont, she made it for Isaac, and Alleluia Tommy.’ But Nettie, as she spoke eyed the good things wistfully, and went nearer the table.

‘Did sho,’ he cried in high glee, ‘they weant get it, joy, if Ruth wor mich troubled ower me t’ last Thursday, sho’ll be war to-neet; coom, lass, let me tie this ap’ron under thee chin for chonce thou sud mucky thee frock, thou’s as welcome to Dont Lister’s feast as a flower i’ May.’

A round of crushed sugar and a slice of cake fell beneath the knife. ‘My word,’ he growled, ‘but our Ann hez meant to cap Isaac, there’s more fruit nor flour here; eat an drink thee fill bairn, put t’ spoooin well intul t’ presarve pot; I growed them there strawberrys i’ me awn garden.’

Nettie needed no second invitation, and Dont watched the child with intense satisfaction until she said—‘I cannot eat any more, Dont.’

‘Tak t’ sponge to thee mouth an get thee hat, we’ll goa now an see Billy Jones afore t’ foaks coom in, for I can’t bide a din.’

‘Who is Billy Jones?’

‘A lad that’s reet poorly, we’ll put what’s left of t’ cake an jam i’ t’ baskit, an thou sal tak ’em to him; then we’ll goa up t’ lanes an gather a posey, an call at Josey Pig’s for aar drinkin.’

Half-a-dozen friends returned with Ruth for tea. The lovefeast had been well attended, and many Christian hearts were filled with joy.

‘Tak yer things off,’ said Mrs. Lister to her guests, ‘t’

kettle 'ill boil enow ; Ann, lass, set t'table, while I get summat to eat.'

Ruth went to the dairy, and Ann got out the best cloth and china ; then waited in anxious expectation for the cake. She considered it a great success, and naturally wished to mark the effect on Robinson ; but she waited in vain, Ruth came not ; loosing patience, she followed to the dairy and found her mother gazing hopelessly at an empty dish.

'What's to doa ?' she questioned.

Ruth started, and replied in a trembling tone—'T'cake's gone, joy !'

'Me cake ! who's takken it ?'

'Thee faather, I lay.'

'What for ?'

'How mun I know ?'

'He desarves—'

'Wisht, Ann, wisht, who can skill thee faather ?'

'I'll tell Isaac,' moaned Ann, sobbing hysterically.

Poor Ruth looked dismayed, for her woman's heart told how great the mortification was to her daughter. 'My lass,' she responded in a husky voice, 'Thou's been speaking i' t' lovefeast bawt t' trials o' t' Christian life, an how thou war'ed agean t' flesh and t' devil : thee talk strengthened me ; dunnot cast me down, my heart warks for thee, bud cheer up thou can mak another.'

'He ow't to be sham'med of hissen.'

'Wisht ! Ann, not a word. He's thee faather, and maister of this house ; "bear thee cross i' meekness, it will bring golden fruit." But we moint stop sarmonizing, folks are waiting. Reach down that ham, and fetch a dozen eggs ; they weant tak long to fry. There's some rice loaf i' t' cupboard, cut some, and toast a few raunds o' bread.'

'Have you any jam ?'

Ruth sighed. 'We mun mak gooseberry do. Dont's takken t'last pot of straws.'

'I hope Miss Nettie's safe,' exclaimed Ann, in sudden alarm.

'Thee be easy abawt that, sho'll tak no harm; thee faather sets too mich store on t'little lass.'

Dont walked leisurely in at eight p.m. Ruth said nothing about the missing cake. She was a wise woman that knew when to speak, and when to hold her tongue. Still her mind was greatly upset, for Ann declared she would return to Kendal. Robinson made every effort to overrule this decision, but he had to learn that a wilful woman will have her way. Wednesday evening, therefore, found Nettie sleeping peacefully in her little cot, and her nurse darning socks in the nursery at Holly Bank.'

Spring went by. Summer came, and passed on its way: the stars of December shed their silvery light alike on rich and poor. The working man had thrown down his tools, and the factory child laid its weary head on the pillow; but there are some whose labour knows no end. The physician, and the pastor go their rounds day by day and night by night, yet how few remember them. 'England sends forth her soldiers' with music, banners, and display; and crowns with laurel the victor of a blood-stained field, but ministers and doctors stand to their posts like the Roman sentinels of old, though showers of lava be hurled upon them. They go at the call of duty, and meet death unflinchingly striving to spare their fellow men. 'Where are monuments to be found' that a grateful nation rears to these heroes? Nowhere! but in the hearts of those they died to save. In the study of an eminent divine, beneath the picture of the crucifixion, may be found the motto: 'I did this for thee: what hast thou done for me?' A question applicable to every one, but alas too often shuffled. It seems so natural to say, 'go for the doctor, fetch the minister,' and no notice is taken, if by that summons one or both die. Do these brave martyrs need no encouragement, comfort, or gratitude? Nay, Tupper says,

'It is a pang keen only to the best, to be injured well deserving.'

Late on the night spoken of, Doctor Hazlehurst was

driving down Old-street, Leeds. Gas lights illuminated streets thronged with wretched looking people. The carriage stopped suddenly : a gaunt, fierce woman, came to the window, and addressed him in an apologetic tone, saying, 'Sir, I hope yuh'll excuse me speaking, bud will yuh please step up this court to No. 12 ; a woman's dying and going on awful. I've sent for t' parish doctor, bud t' Lord knows when he'll get here.'

Mr. Hazlehurst broke away from her with an impatient 'Pshaw, to him,' and rapidly mounted the rickety stairs. A rushlight, stuck in a medicine bottle, revealed the figure of an old woman, laid on a low truckle-bed ; the room was entirely bare of furniture, not even a spark of fire in the grate. He looked on the ghastly face, and saw at a glance she was doomed. A clergyman knelt at the side of the bed with clasped hands and bowed head. He rose, and whispered 'she is quieter now.'

Doctor Hazlehurst gazed with interest at the youthful minister. 'I can do no good,' he said. 'How long has she been like this ?'

'The accident happened this afternoon, but I only heard of it just now. My name is Donald Chaucer : I am vicar of this parish.'

Truly his work was not attractive, but it pleased him. The mission was amongst the extreme poor, who were huddled together like cattle in lanes, courts, and alleys. There was no end to his labour ; but he consoled himself, knowing that 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

'The room is fearfully cold,' said Mr. Hazlehurst ; 'a fire must be put on at once.'

'But there does not seem any coals in the house.'

'We must buy some then.'

'Shall I go and order them, Doctor ?'

'No, you remain here, please ; the poor creature may any moment regain consciousness and need spiritual consolation. I will send away my carriage, and see what can be done.'

He ran down stairs and out into the dark, narrow court; dirt and misery surrounded him on every side. The tumble-down houses had all paper-stuffed windows; their tenants were beggars or aged bed-ridden paupers, dying slowly on parish relief. He hurried on, and near eleven returned with a woman carrying coal and chips.

‘You have not been long,’ remarked the Vicar, with a well-satisfied smile.

‘My man told me of a coal staith close at hand: they will be across with more presently.’ He walked to the bedside, but there was still no recognition in the wild, restless eyes: nothing but an incoherent muttering. ‘A few tea-spoonsfull of arrowroot may be wanted soon. Which of us must make it?’

‘I will; such work often falls to a clergyman’s lot.’

‘Then set about it at once, please.’ A bright blaze now lit up the room; the Vicar drew from his coat pocket a small parcel of arrowroot and jar of condensed beef tea, but the difficulty was a pan. They sought every corner down stairs in vain. The pressed nurse was sleepy, and vouchsafed no assistance; at last a child’s tin mug turned up, and the Vicar wondered if little footsteps had ever sounded in that loathsome den, where the very atmosphere seemed burdened with sin, want, and crime. He washed the tiny vessel, and poured fresh water in; then held it over the fire to boil. His eyes were full of compassion, and the face beamed with angelic charity.

‘Is this true about her husband?’ enquired Mr. Hazlehurst.

‘I fear so, but would rather not speak of it.’

The Doctor gave a sigh of inexpressible relief, and said in his firm, cheery way, ‘Do you usually carry beef tea and arrowroot in your pocket?’

‘Always; I find it a good plan in poor districts.’

The sufferer groaned, ‘Doctor Hazlehurst went and softly wiped away the great drops of anguish on her brow,’ and

again examined the wound. The head was fearfully dirty, but he bravely conquered repugnance and redressed it with an eagle eye, a lady's hand, and a lion's heart. 'Who can tell how dreary were the hours of that night?' still they both remained, knowing the end was near. Suddenly an oath and a curse sounded on the stairs, and a man with blackguard stamped on every feature reeled in ; he was stout, broad, and awkward, with bullneck, and coarse gray hair : in fact, his whole appearance denoted bear-like strength and bear-like ferocity. 'At his voice the woman appeared partly to regain consciousness ; the lips trembled, and a look of agony darkened her face.'

'Hush !' said Doctor Hazlehurst.

'You be d—d ;' was the reply.

'Be still ! this woman is dying.'

'Fudge,' shouted the bully. A powerful grasp was laid on his shoulder, and a stern voice said, 'You have been wanted, my man, since five this afternoon.' He paled to his lips, and shook in the policeman's hands like an aspen leaf.

'Do your duty with as little noise as possible,' whispered Doctor Hazlehurst.

A brief but fierce scuffle ensued, but brute force soon succumbed to disciplined strength, and black Charlie was walked off to jail. The woman half arose, looked beseechingly at the Vicar, and gasped, 'Oh ! God, I have sinned. Jesus have mercy. Parson, pray.' A shudder crept over the limbs ; a heavy sigh escaped her lips, and her soul was with God. Thus she died.

'Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving with meekness
Her sins to her Saviour."

CHAPTER VII.

OWD GRANNY.

THE Leeds Crown Court assembled on February 2nd, and the large room was closely packed with people, many of them, alas, ladies, who had congregated that morning, not for works of mercy, but to gratify their morbid taste for the horrible. The judge sat enthroned on a chair in scarlet and ermine, supported by sheriff, mayor, and a circle of wigged barristers; but the chief attraction was black Charlie, who stood with folded arms in the prisoners' dock 'charged with murder.' His face was repulsive, his eyes heavy, and the lower lip protruded; he knew the awful position in which he stood, but had determined gamely to meet his fate. The case opened with a statement from the crown lawyer; then the chief witness was called, who stated she had found the deceased woman lying, in a dying condition at the foot of her own stairs in Chadwick-court, but whether Moll had fallen, or been purposely thrown down, she was unable to prove. Doctor Hazlehurst gave evidence as to the cause of death, but could not say if the injury resulted from accident or violence. The Rev. Donald Chaucer said Mary Hodge was only conscious for a few minutes, and left no deposition against her husband. The judge then summed up the evidence, and charged the jury to do their duty. In twenty minutes the cry of 'silence' proclaimed their return; the hush was so profound, that the dropping of a pin might have been heard throughout the vast crowd; then the clerk of the court challenged the twelve demanding—'How say you, is the person guilty, or not guilty?' 'Not guilty,' rung through the tribunal hall, every eye was fixed on Charlie, he had prepared to hear his death

sentence with pluck, but not a proclamation of pardon, the hope of freedom was too much even for that villain. He sunk back, apparently helpless, knowing his wife's silent forgiveness had saved him from the scaffold. Thus to the satisfaction of some, and the disappointment of others, Hodge was discharged. But his punishment was not over. Old-street had its code of honour ; burglary, theft, and begging were freely allowed as matters of trade, but murder was a recognized crime. Black Charlie might be acquitted by judge and jury, still he had to pass through a severe ordeal in Chadwick-court. When he returned home, his neighbours vouchsafed no words of welcome ; women drew their ragged gowns closer round them, as if his very touch was pollution, he turned the key of his empty house and entered alone. No wife's voice greeted him, no trembling creature fled from his curse or blow, the solemn hush of recent death prevailed. The flags had become damp, and moisture discoloured the walls. Charlie groaned, and went upstairs ; some dark stains were on the steps, he examined the spots and muttered—'Moll's blood.' The light was dropped with a fearful oath. Those stairs to him were like the famous ones at Rome, they took a long time to mount. He stood at last beside the truckle-bed, with huge drops of sweat trickling from his brow. What did he see to make teeth chatter, limbs shake, and eyes start almost from their sockets ? was it handwriting on the wall, or a woman's reproachful face upon the pillow ?

'Moll,' he shouted, 'I didn't mean to kill thee ; don't gloor at me, blast thee, thou makes my heart stand still.' The ruffian paused, for a streak of moonlight fell upon the white-washed wall ; he fixed his gaze on the pale, silvery ray, his jaws opened and his hair stood straight with horror, he seized an hatchet, and with the bound of a tiger and the strength of an Hercules, struck at the bed ; blow followed blow, until the wood frame lay at his feet. 'There,' he cried, 'that d——d thing will preach to me no more !'

While Charlie smashed the only piece of furniture he possessed, a man knocked at the door.

'Lift t' latch, maister,' said a woman, popping her head out of an upper window, 't' gaffer went in a bit sin.'

The stranger entered, called loudly, but no answer was given, so, after waiting a time, he also went upstairs. Black Charlie had just finished his work, and stood, hatchet in hand.

'Hodge,' the word startled him, he turned with the look of a demon, and saw a tall man standing just within the room.

'Hardcastle,' he exclaimed in astonishment, 'what do yuh want here? tak yuh sen off, and be d——d.'

Trip, no way disappointed, placed his back against the door, and remained silent. Charlie eyed him curiously, felt the edge of the hatchet in a suggestive way, and said—

'Are yuh going?'

'Enow, lad, bud I mun hev a word or two wi' thee first.'

'Be quick, then,' growled the bully, 'or I'll—' An oath completed the sentence.

There was a dead pause for a moment, then Trip spoke of Christ in a tone and with a manner that commanded attention. Regarding doctrines, creeds, and plans of salvation he was ignorant, but not of the redeeming blood shed on Calvary. St. Ambrose wisely said—'The civil authority has no right to interdict the liberty of speaking, nor the sacerdotal to prevent speaking what you think. Trip spoke of Jesus's pardoning love, with a heart full of burning zeal, and charity, his language might be broad and ungrammatical, yet it lacked not the fire and power of St. Barnabas.

Charlie listened unwillingly, and said at last with a sneer—'Come, come, none o' that balderdash, I've known thee afore to-neet, thou used to be a fine hand at cock-feighting an thieving.'

'I knaw that, lad,' replied Trip, quietly.

Hodge glared at him fiercely, but there was a real dash of truth in those simple words, so the leer gradually gave way to

a softer expression, he threw down the hatchet and rubbed his eyes with the sleeve of his coat.

'Think, lad,' cried Hardcastle, 'what God has done for thee, thou mud hev been i' Armley or hell-fire to-neet. When I seed thee standing i' t'prisoner's dock, I fare dothered wi' fear, then prayed, "Lord spare that mon, thou tuk pity on me, do t' same for him." Oh ! Hodge, it were a fearful moment when t'jury chaps returned, it warn't thee body, so much as thee soul that lig'ed on my heart ; nivver sal I forget t'sound "Nor Guilty," it felt loike daybreak after neet."

'Not Guilty,' muttered Charlie, 'not guilty, dost thou believe in human judgment, Trip ?'

'Hi, sometimes.'

'It wur wrong, to-day, mate ; I wonder if I sal be haunted allus with her ghost ?'

'Whose ghost ?'

'Molls.'

'Moll's wi' God.'

'She's now't o' t' sort, I see her pale face ivverywhere, it wur wi' me i' prison, an it's here now i' this room ; I shall goa mad if sho dun'nut tak hersen off.'

Trip spoke again of Christ's willingness to forgive sins, and pleaded him to reform. His persuasions were at first, like a child hammering on a stone wall, but undaunted he continued until the hardened sinner yielded.

'How must I lead a new life ? thou knows I've me living to make by house-breaking, it's grand thee preaching, but I and my mates hev'nt turned praying Methodees yet.'

Hardcastle put his hand kindly on Charlie's shoulder, and said, 'Lad, I know thou can't begin afresh i' Leeds, for owd chums will prove moighty stumbling-blocks, but there's other tawns i' t'world, 'Merica, they tell me, is a fine country, wilt thou goa ?'

'America be hanged, where's the brass to come from ?'

Trip put his hand into his pocket, and drew out a small canvas bag, saying, 'There's been some gud work lately at aar

mill, I've saved a bit of brass, abowt length of a pound, mak a new start, and thou's welcome to it.'

'Nay, I'll not tak thee sovereign, it's one thing to rob a rich house, another to crib a poor man's savings.'

'Be my benker, and if thou's ivver rich, and I in need, pay me back. But what dost thou say abowt 'Merica, I'll manage to get t'brass for thee passage, God being my helper.'

Charlie sprung to his feet, his dogged countenance for once blazing with eagerness.

'Do that, Hardcastle, and I'll goa gladly.'

'Thou'll give ov'er thieving and drinking?'

'Hi, lad.'

'That'll do,' replied Trip, joyously, 'I can trust my owd mate, now.'

'Honour between thieves,' muttered Hodge.

Hardcastle recoiled for an instant, then cried pleadingly, 'Oh! lad, lad, can'st na believe i' my repentance?'

'I'm reet sorry I sed owt to vex thee, but t'words coom nat'ral like, thou mun forgive me.'

'I've nowt to forgive; but t'clock has just struck'en nine, clap on thee hat, and come wi' me.'

'I've no where to go.'

'But I hev, thou sure'ly does'nt think I'm bawn to leave thee i' this hoile, my owd Granny will give us a bed, and a mouthful of summat to eat.'

Hodge needed no second invitation, he was glad to leave the desolate house, where every shadow resembled a woman's ghost. They passed down Chadwick-court together, the dress and appearance of the inhabitants bespoke their extreme poverty, many of them were barefooted, and clothed literally in rags, some of the aged had no covering on their heads, excepting their blanched and grizzled locks. Alas! the expediency of misery had begotten the expediency of morals, and in their shiftless natures, you could see that abject destitution had eaten into their very hearts. Charlie pulled his hat well over the upper part of his face, and a singularly hard expression came

again across the features, it might be present mortification doing battle with a dumb prayer for pardon. Trip's gaze was rivetted on his companion, he sought evidently for some sign of contrition, but the inflexible defiance with which Hodge had armed himself was only to be seen, his task was no easy one he felt. 'I want thee, Charlie,' he said suddenly, as they turned the street corner, 'to tak thee hat off, and snod thee toppin a bit, thou looks soa boggard like, thou'll flay Granny, sho keeps a shop i' Greenwood-fold, and Sally says t'owd woman's a top hand at toffy makking.'

Cressey Hardcastle's store comprised odds and ends of all kinds. Children's socks, men's braces, checker-brats, pounds of sugar, half-penny candles, and gingerbread gentlemen with comfit eyes, boys' whips and whistles, black lead, Cadbury cocoa, and castor oil; in the centre of the window stood a glass flower dish, containing six large potatoes cleanly washed, and a couple of Yarmouth bloaters as specimens. The shop was Trip's delight, even in his worst days he would steal down Greenwood fold to peep through the half-curtained window. Granny looked a dear old creature as she sat in her arm chair with cushions of blue and white print, God's peace was on her face, and glorified the silvery hair.

'Can yuh let a prodigal hev a bed to-neet?' asked Trip, opening the door.

'A prodigal, poor thing; tell him to come for'ards.'

Hardcastle walked in himself first, and said something to her in a low tone. A shadow for a moment clouded Cressey's brow, but it quickly passed. 'Ne'er heed lad,' she whispered, 'skin muck weshes off, an t'smell of Armley jail mun do t'same. Tak him to t'weshhoose, giv him plenty of soap and watter; but moind, he sinds his'sen weel. Dost think he's ony clean shirts.'

Hardcastle shook his head.

'Well, dun'nut ax him about donings. I'll get some of thee grandfaather's out of t'kest.'

Black Charlie was then introduced. Granny stirred the

fire, and kindly pointed to a chair, saying, 'Draw to, and mak thee sen at home, maister.'

Trip presently proposed supper, adding 'Hodge and I wod loike a wesh first; will ye reake us a towel?'

Cressey handed one to each, and remarked, 'I made them out ov a bit of rare gud harding.'

'They are gud,' replied Trip, holding his up for Charlie's edification. 'Did ye wesh them yuhr'sen?'

'I did that lad, I can't abide a mucky owd cloot; most foaks rand here boils dirt in i'stead ov out.' Cressey took down as she spoke a small ring of keys, and unlocked an ancient chest of drawers; then selected, with trembling fingers, from a pile of linen what was needed. She next untied a paper parcel and lifted out a man's swallow-tailed coat, with immense brass buttons: a red plush waistcoat was touched tenderly. It evidently spoke of some event in the far off past, which awoke long-sleeping emotions. Poor Granny had gone to look at the waistcoat for thirty years: it was to her as a talisman that possessed language, or like the whisperings of a kindred spirit wafted across eternity's vast ocean. It was put back into the parcel twice, and twice taken out again. 'I ne'er meant to part wi' thee,' she murmured, 'but t'Lord hath need,' and fearing her own weakness Cressey resolutely turned the lock, crossed the room, and called 'Trip.'

'I's here, owd woman.'

'Tak these to thee mate and tell him, wi' my best respects, to don his'sen in them.'

'Shirt, stockings, boots, breeches, waistcoat, coat, hat, Granny!'

'Hi, lad, what dost thou gloor at?'

'They are my grandfaather's, and yuh said yuh'd nivver giv them away. I axed yuh mysen for this,' he proceeded, gazing at the coloured vest with wistful eyes, 'bud ye said, noa.'

'And were thou to beg for it now I sud say t'same.'

'Yet yuh'll give it another chap.' There was a slight tone of injury in the man's voice.

'A greeter nor thee begged; and I darn't hold it back.'

'Whoa?'

'Him as spoke abow't t'cup of cold watter, thou knows.'

'It's reet, nob'bud bless me Granny.' Trip bent his head. Cressey lifted up her hand and said, 'T'Lord bless thee, and keep thee. T'Lord mak his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. T'Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and giv thee peace, both now and for ever. Amen.'

Black Charlie looked pale and haggard as he took his seat at the supper table. How horribly dark the den of wickedness and filth appeared now, to this Christian's cottage. He glanced hastily at the small deal table, set with pint mugs of steaming coffee, bowl of potatoes, and dish of fried fish. 'How happy she must be,' he thought, 'in such a comfortable home.' Cressey said grace, the first Hodge had ever heard. The supper proved a success, for the old woman was too good a politician to say much at first to Charlie: she felt her way. When thanks had been offered, and the table cleared, Trip announced he was going out.

'It's close on eleven, wherever art thou bawn lað?'

'To Mr. Osborn's.'

'He'll be i' bed I war'ent.'

'I dun'not think soa, t'quality oft sits up till morning.'

'Thou'd better wait till to-morrow.'

'I munnat, it's business.'

'Whose business? None thine, I lay.'

'T'Lord's.'

'Goa lad, I'll wait up of thee be it ever soa late. I wonder what he's up to,' mused Granny. 'He'll acquaint me at efter, noa doubt; but I'd as leave know'a now.' She turned to Hodge. He looked anything but prepossessing, for the fierce, despairing expression had again settled on his face. 'There's sin, and not ovver mich penitance I's flaid, poor chap: hle's i' t'devi's clutches, bud t'Lord can set him free.'

Clasping her hands together she rested them on her knee, and sung one of Wesley's hymns. Charlie maintained a dogged silence, so Cressey repeated the last verse several times, then questioned.

'Dost thou ivver think ov t'Saviour's love?' my friend.

'No, I don't.'

'Nor abowt His sufferings?'

'No.'

'May He hev mercy on thi sinful soul,' she cried, in consternation.

'Mercy, old woman. What mercy do I deserve?'

'There,' thought Cressey, 'I've fund my road; bless t'Lord.' And she told him with touching simplicity the parable of the lost sheep.

CHAPTER VIII.


PRIMROSES.

TRIP tramped boldly through the deep mud. I know of no man, he soliloquised, that's soa loikely to give me a helping hand, as Maister Joe; he's a fine chap, though a bit comical i' his notions. It was close on twelve when he walked up the avenue of larch trees leading to the back door. The house was all alive, lights were in many of the front windows, and servants' voices could be heard quite plainly. Mr. Osborn had been giving a bachelor dinner party, the last guest had just left, and Joe sat stretching himself in an easy chair before a jolly rollicking fire, he was lighting his final cigar, when the footman entered, and said,

'A man is asking to see you, sir.'

'It is too late, Ned, tell him to call again.'

'He says his business is very urgent.'



'Botheration ! did he give his name ?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well ?'

'Trip Hardcastle.'

'You may bring him up,' replied Mr. Osborn, with evident pleasure. When Triptolimus walked into the drawing-room, he touched his head, and said, 'I hope your honour's well.'

'Quite, thank you, any Pudsey news ?'

'Hi, sir, t'Lister's are doing grandly, Isaac Robinson hez fund a hoose, and is wareing part brass on fine furnitur. I rea'con he'll fend his mistress when he weds Ann.'

'I fancy so,' but you look tired, shall I mix you a glass of whiskey ?'

'Noa, thanks.'

'You appear in trouble, has anything gone wrong ?'

'Noa, Maister Joseph, but I's tew'd i' my moind.'

'Can I assist you ? if so, speak out.'

'Hev yuh heeard abowt Charlie Hodge ?' asked Hardcastle, shuffling his feet, and looking sheepish.

'Yes, he was tried for murder.'

'I want ye, please, to help me to send him tul 'Merica.'

'For what reason ?'

'To save his soul.'

'Charity begins at home,' replied the gentleman, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. 'Don't you think I had better look to my own sins first ?'

'Ye sudn't speak soa, sir, it's ovver solemn a thing to mak game on. Supposing t'Lord were to require an account of ye to-neet, what would ye say ?'

'You put things awkwardly, Trip. But what about this Hodge ?'

'I hev been agate talking tul him, and he's promised to goa tul 'Merica, if I'll fend t'brass.'

'What made you go near the fellow ?'

'He were once a mate of mine.'

'Is that a fact ?'

'It is, sir, t'devil ne'er hed two better bairns than Charlie and me, we did all we could to suit our brazzon'd faather, wark-ing day and neet i' his service, and trapped a rare lot of soft-heads intul vineyard. If I's changed, nowt but t'grace of God hez done it. Will ye help me to pull Hodge frea' t'burning lake?'

'Certainly; but why send him to America?'

'There's soa many temptations i' Leeds; an' owd chums, I's flaid, will put allurements i' his way.'

'You wish to give him a chance on new ground, I presume?'

'Just soa.'

'Your plan is a novel one. I think the fellow ought to have been hung.'

'Yuh're heart tells a different tale to that, sir. I believe t' time is coming when t' gallows will be posed out ov England.'

'Are you an advocate for the abolishment of Capital punishment?'

'I know'a nowt abawt advocating, but I wo'dn't send souls afore t' appointed time to face their Maker. It's an owful thing to doa, pertick'ler i' a Christian land.'

Joe looked grave for a few moments, then inquired, 'When do you wish him to leave?'

'Ony time.'

'The "Red King" sails from Liverpool next Thursday. As you are so interested in the man I will pay his passage, and write also to Messrs. Ward and Son's, of New York. They will arrange, I am sure, to have him conveyed safely up the country. We must not leave him uncared for.'

'God bless yuh, Maister Joe.'

'I am going to Kendal next week, so call on Monday; I will then give you full directions. But mind this, Charles Hodge sails in "The Red King," or I will have nothing more to do with him.'

Business matters being satisfactorily settled, Joe gradually

began to get out of Hardcastle the facts concerning his conversion. Trip seemed pleased with the comfortable arm chair, and talked about his religious experience with charming frankness until Ned entered with coffee. After drinking a cup he arose, thanked Mr. Osborn profusely, and left. That night he dreamed that Hodge had grown wondrously rich in the New World, and lived in a fine house with luxurious furniture.

Fifteen months have passed since William Osborn returned to Holly Bank. His life there had been so sweetly peaceful that he scarcely knew how time had fled. One spring evening a group stood on the verandah watching Russell's "trial effort:" the child managed bravely, but his aunt caught an attack of fidgets, so Ann was forbidden to let him walk alone. As the party stepped back into the dining room, Mrs. Singleton turned to a servant and said, 'Go directly to Burnside, Tom, and tell my father Mr. Joe has arrived.'

Dinner was over; Mr. Singleton and William had gone out to smoke their cigars; the children, with two young friends, were playing croquet, and their childish laughter mingled pleasantly with the soft whispering of the evening breeze. Mrs. Singleton sat watching them at an open window. Joe stood leaning on the back of her chair, pleading that tea might be served on the balcony.

'By Jove, Mary, but Dora knows how to Queen it over yon lad. Just listen; it's come here, go there; fetch this, carry that.'

'James is too yielding,' said Mrs. Singleton, with a suppressed yawn.

'It's perfectly abominable. Fancy that wee chit ordering him about like a slave. Who is he?'

'Captain Wilton's grandson.'

'Wilton of the Craggs?'

'Yes; his parents are in India. They sent him home to be educated. Dora calls him "Dandy red cap," and rules the good-tempered boy completely.'

'Girls all like to tyrannize.'

'Dora is only a child.'

Joe shrugged his shoulders. 'The seed is there,' he replied. 'I advise you to commence early to temper her despotism.'

Mrs. Singleton sighed, then said, 'William is looking better.'

'Much. I am delighted that father and he are reconciled. How did it come about?'

'We were at lunch one day. Our father unexpectedly entered the room, William sprung up to meet him. He took his hand and said, kindly, "My son, come home and be happy." William shook his head resolutely, and answered "I cannot; I have no home." "I make your return the condition of my pardon. I want you to come; and ask you to do so now." That evening William went back to Burnside.'

Joe looked lovingly down on the sweet face, and remained silent for a time; presently Mrs. Singleton felt a soft touch on her hand, 'Shall I disturb you, mamma?' asked Nettie.

'No, love, do you want anything?'

'Will you please let us go to Gibson Wood to-morrow? Harry says there are quantities of Spring flowers up in Hagar's dell.'

'Yes, love, but Lister must accompany you.'

'May I go, Nettie?' inquired her uncle.

'Yes, you darling,' and the child bounded out, leaving the gentleman to smooth his brow at leisure.

The sun, next morning, shone brightly into the night nursery. One playful beam fell across the bed where Dora slept: she moved uneasily, sighed softly, and awoke, then sat up in the crib, rubbed her eyes, rumbled the white counterpane, and called 'Ann! Ann, come and dress me.'

Lister felt she would like to give her a good whipping, but when Dora held up her saucy face to be washed she forgot all anger, and gently patted the rosy cheeks with the

sponge instead ; when prettily dressed Ann carried her down stairs. Mrs. Singleton had attended to Nettie, so Lister pinned a napkin under Dora's chin, and poured out the daintily-boiled bread and milk. After breakfast the open carriage came round. William sat inside with the children, and Joe on the box : the coachman cracked his whip, and away they went briskly over smooth roads, and passed hedges fragrant with hawthorn. At last the fine old church came in view, and the grand bells struck up a merry peal, joining their kingly notes to the caroling of a thousand birds.'

'A wedding !' exclaimed Nettie, clapping her hands, 'What lovely dresses. Do look uncle Joe.'

'Dat's a nasty wedding,' chimed in Dora ; 'I does hate it.'

'No, it is a pretty one,' said Jimmy Wilton.

'Hold your tongue, Dandy, I didn't tell you to speak, naughty boy.'

'Hush !' said William, 'it is not nice to talk so, darling.'

The carriage paused for a moment to let Nettie look at the bridal party, then dashed on through the ancient town slumbering in sunshine. 'Oh ! Westmoreland, pet child of nature, sublime in thy snowy robe of winter, beautiful in thy emerald mantle of spring, radiant in thy flowery garb of summer, and glorious in thy autumn crown of golden fruit. Is thy loveliness a faint reflection from Eden ? do angels droop their wings over thy green-clad valleys ? What makes thy maidens fair as Venus, and thy sons strong as forest trees ?' Thus mused William Osborn as they drove down shady lanes, where honeysuckles and wild roses were budding forth, the air was laden with spicy fragrances of thyme and juniper : snowy petals of apple blossom fell from many an orchard tree. The ruined castle faded in the distance, and the children talked about Queen Catherine, who saved her head by flattering the royal blue beard. Snug farm houses were left behind ; then came the joyous shout of

'The wood, the wood.' They entered through an avenue of gigantic oaks: ivy grew round the trunks, and seemed to say—King of the forest shelter me. When the carriage stopped there was a rush for baskets, trowels, and spades; then off scampered the merry party to the wood. Hagar's dell was carpeted with soft moss,—primroses, like stars, gleamed everywhere, playing at bo-peep with wild violets. The sense of freedom was exhilarating, and even the gentlemen felt as if they could walk, run, or fly. Ann laid the luncheon cloth, with cold fowls, lamb, bread, fruit, and cream, then asked William for the cowslip wine.

'Really, Lister,' he said, handing her a bottle, 'This place is enchanting.'

He might well say so, for the incense from millions of flowers was wafted about. Joe thought if ever there was an exquisite moment in his life it was this. Dora sat perched on the lower branch of a walnut-tree. She appeared a fairy queen reclining in a verdant bower. James lolled at her feet, listening to the cool streamlet making nature's music. Nettie had taken off her large straw hat, and looked infinitely charming. Harry Henderson was resting in a shady nook: he prided himself upon taking things easy, so asked her, with provoking coolness 'to reach him his lunch.'

'Will you have lamb or chicken?' questioned Nettie, meekly.

'Bring both, dear.'

'Dandy! I'm's hot, come and fan me,' called Dora.

'James, do not be ordered about in that way,' said Joe, sternly.

'I like to do as she bids me, Mr. Osborn,' responded the boy, eagerly.

'And I prefer to make Netty obey me,' remarked Harry.

'It's high time you young gentlemen were sent to Eton,' laughed William. 'Come, finish lunch, we must return home.'

The dressing bell had just rung when they reached Holly

Bank. Mrs. Singleton gave the children permission to dine down stairs ; so Lister carried them off to dress, then little feet pattered out of sight, and peals of laughter rang through the long corridor.

‘ Miss Nettie, and Dora, do come ; your mamma will be cross,’ pleaded Ann.

‘ Be quick, shouted Harry.

It was a merry evening, the girls looked perfectly lovely, and their mother knew it. Hot-house plants shewed superbly against the white cloth and silver on the dinner table. Soup, fish, meat, ducks, custards, and puddings were delicious : Joe suddenly put down his wine-glass, and exclaimed,

‘ What a glorious sunset ! Will you ride to Milnthrop, Gilbert ? it is a shame to stay indoors.’

‘ Gladly, we will go round to the stables, then you can choose a horse for yourself.’

Mrs. Singleton took the hint, and rose, saying, ‘ Come, boys let us take a turn in the picture gallery.’

‘ I will follow you soon, Mary,’ whispered William, as he held open the door.

He found her standing, pale and trembling, gazing at a portrait of Jack.

‘ I wonder your husband allows you to come here,’ he said angrily ; ‘ let us follow the children, Harry seems to be amusing them.’

‘ I prefer returning to the drawing-room.’

‘ James Wilton is a fine lad,’ he remarked, offering his arm.

‘ Yes, and passionately fond of Dora.’

‘ How bright and merry she is.’

‘ I wish she was amiable, like Nettie.’

‘ A good governess would soon rectify that.’

‘ Joe says I am spoiling her, but the child is so sensitive.’

‘ Visitors are coming up the walk ; so they will spare you proceeding with your defence.’ A peal at the front-door bell, then the footman announced Miss North and Mr. Larkings.

'Good evening, Mary, Mr. Larkings and I have been looking at the new schools, they are excellent buildings, I do trust we may meet with a suitable mistress.'

'A master will be needed, also, Esther.'

'Master! yes, certainly; one will be wanted, but he is secondary.'

'Miss North thinks,' Mr. Larkings ventured to say, then paused, and glanced at his fair companion.

'I decide, Mr. Larkings, not think,' was the response.

'Miss North decides,' said the gentleman, 'that a certificated mistress is scarcely the proper person.'

'I generally find,' interposed the lady, 'that young women who have taken up diplomas are remarkably conceited. In fact, common people's children require no education beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, the higher branches are not requisite.'

'I cannot agree with you, Esther, on that point,' said William.'

'Why not?'

'Because talent may be found in a poor man's child.'

'Fudge.'

'Think of artists, poets, sculptors, and engineers, who have risen from the lowest grades of society, to shine as burning lights.'

'In fairy tales,' sneered Miss North.

'Exactly,' drawled Mr. Larkings.

'Take Robert Burns, for example. Many people, I know, make a great fuss over his writings, but I never found anything to admire, mere scribbles—nothing more, it requires position, and a certain amount of——'

'Land,' suggested Mrs. Singleton, ironically.

'Not altogether; title and wealth, I judge, give weight and worth to a poem. Mr. Larkings writes divinely.'

'Well, take Keats, was he not a genius?'

'Oh! there are exceptions under all circumstances. I never care to read though, of such people, they are mistaken of nature.'

‘Great mistakes !’ simpered Mr. Larkings.

William was going to say, ‘I beg to differ,’ but Miss North cut him short.

‘Oh, don’t apologise, there is no need, I know your crotchets, and bear with them ; yet it is rather unpleasant when a man’s views are so erroneous.’ ‘Where is my god-child, Mary ? I should like to ask her a few questions from the catechism.’

‘In the garden.’ Mrs. Singleton went to the window, and called ‘Nettie.’

There was no reply, for Lister had seen Miss North, and fearing her pet might receive a lecture, sent the boys home and hurried the girls off to bed.

‘Tom,’ questioned William, ‘where is Miss Nettie?’

‘The young ladies have gone to bed, sir.’

‘You will have to postpone your lesson, Esther.’

‘I never postpone a duty. Be kind enough to tell Lister she must bring the child to the Oaks in the morning ; I am exceedingly anxious regarding her religious training.’

‘I see no cause for anxiety,’ said William.

‘I dare say you do not, nevertheless I am greatly dissatisfied ; principles must be engrafted early if we mean them to take root. “Sparing the rod” is the weakness of the age. I hope you have a birch in your nursery, Mary.’

‘Indeed I have not.’

‘What a lamentable confession. How can you be so blindly careless ? Take William for example. I firmly believe if he had been properly chastised when a boy a great deal of disgrace would have been spared.’

‘Esther.’ The word was plainly half a plea and half a reproach.

‘Nay, Mary, I will speak freely now that I have entered upon the subject. You know how distressing that marriage was to myself, and the way my cousin received William home again, after wasting his fortune, was simply preposterous.

‘It was scriptural.’

‘Ah, you refer to the prodigal and the fatted calf ; but

that is figurative. We are not expected to carry out such illustrations.'

'It would be perfectly absurd to do so,' remarked Mr. Larkings.

'Perfectly,' responded Miss North. 'However, I have cleared my mind, and trust I have not appeared ungracious.'

There was no reply. Mrs. Singleton had crossed to her brother's side, and stood with his cold hand clasped in her's.

'Dear, dear,' cried Miss North, looking steadily at him. 'He must be dreadfully ill.'

'Fainted?' asked Mr. Larkings, nervously.

'No, sir, men rarely faint.'

'Can I do anything, Esther?'

'Be still, Theo,' replied Miss North, 'he will come to if no fuss is made over him.'

'Will you ring the bell, Mr. Larkings?' said Mrs. Singleton. The footman entered. 'Tom, is Miss North's brougham here?' she enquired.

'Yes, maam.'

'Pardon, me, Esther, but I must say good-night.'

Miss North's cheeks went scarlet, but she concealed all other signs of mortification, and left the room hastily.

William was still unconscious when the gentlemen returned.

'Confound that woman, what a pest she is,' cried Joe.

CHAPTER IX.

TWO POUND TEN.

ONE morning, Osborn and his brother were holding a discussion upon Hamilton's 'Philosophy.'

'Sir William has a fine metaphysical mind,' said Joe, lazily:

'yet, after all his vast researches, he has to own that the highest reach of human science is the scientific recognition of human ignorance.'

'What are you young fellows talking about?' asked Mr. Singleton, tossing down the *Westmoreland Gazette*.

'Philosophy.'

'Humph! I don't trouble with that.' 'Nettie,' he called, 'come here.' The door opened immediately, and the girl bounded in. Her father started, and drew her tenderly to him: 'why are your eyes swollen? have you been crying?'

'Yes, papa.'

'What is the matter?'

'I want to go with you and mamma to Sandside, it is so lonely without Dora.'

'Doctor Lewis says both Russell and she have whooping cough, I cannot permit you to accompany us, lest you take it.'

'I don't fear, papa.'

'But I do, so be a good child, and stay at home cheerfully. Your uncle Joe is going to remain, to look after you and the house.'

'How jolly!'

'Hush, pet! I cannot allow you to speak so.'

'We will have a good time, and you must ride over every day to see me, papa.'

'Not every day, say twice a week.'

'May I go to the fair?'

'If you are very obedient, your uncle will drive through, and let you have a peep.'

'Can I buy a new ball?'

'Certainly, darling.'

'A skipping rope?'

'Yes.'

'May I give a small garden party next week?'

'You must ask mamma about that. But see, here is half-a-sovereign to buy a paint box.'

'Will it buy a big box?'

'I should think so, my treasure.'

'Five or six shillings will be plenty to give for one bought at a fair,' said William.

'Very good,' replied Mr. Singleton, stroking Nettie's curls fondly, 'put the rest into your purse.'

'My new silk purse?'

'Decidedly.'

'Can I spend it as I choose, papa?'

'Of course, love.'

'Nettie, put on your habit,' called Joe, next day, 'I want to give you a riding lesson.'

'Isn't Jessie a beauty?' she said, patting the head of a pretty chestnut pony. 'Grandpapa gave her to me, uncle, for a birthday present.'

'Grandpapa spoils you, I fear.'

Nettie laughed merrily, then questioned, 'Are we going to Kendal?'

'Probably.'

'Will you please select a paint box for me?'

'With pleasure.'

'My half-sovereign is in this purse, be careful not to lose it.'

Joe lifted her into the saddle, and they trotted leisurely down the gravel walk, across the smooth grass, and out by the Park gate. A brisk canter brought them to Kendal. Nettie was a good little horsewoman, and guided her pony through the fair without difficulty. They stopped several times to make purchases, when they cleared the town she begged for a gallop.

'Come along, then; but mind you don't get frightened.' Nettie said little on the homeward ride. 'You are not poorly?' Joe asked, as he took her down.

'No; only tired.'

'Lunch, and a rest will put that right; run off, and get your hair tidied.'

When she returned, Joe said, 'I am going with some friends, this afternoon, to Windermere; you won't feel lonely, pet?'

'Oh, no!' but the rosy lips pouted.

'Queer, wee mortal, there is plenty of good and evil in her, I wonder which bump is prominent.' He took two sovereigns out of his pocket, and gave them to her, saying 'Those are yours, darling.'

'Mine, uncle, all mine ?'

'Every penny.'

'To do just what I like with ?'

'They are my fairing. Bank, give, or spend them. Now promise to be good, and mind not on any account to ride until I return.'

Nettie promised, and bid her uncle good-bye cheerfully.

I wonder what she will do with the two pounds, Joe mused, then it flashed across his mind that mischief might come through it.

The child played on the balcony for a while, then went to her father's den, and thus soliloquised : Two gold sovereigns ! how bright they are ! let me see what silver I have in my purse ! three half-crowns, two shillings, and sixpence ; that is exactly two-pound-ten. I really do not know what I shall do with so much money. 'Harry has no kind uncle ; poor, dear Harry ! I will buy him a keepsake to take with him to Eton.' She touched the bell.

'Tom,' she said with dignity, 'take this sovereign, and get it changed immediately.'

The footman stared, but obeyed the command. When he returned with the change, she said coolly,

'I am going out for a while.'

'Sarah has gone to Daisy Farm, Miss,' Tom ventured to say.

'That does not matter, I can take care of myself, without the under nursery-maid.'

'If Mr. Osborn, or the young master calls, what am I to say, please ?'

'I hardly know, Tom, I may change my mind, but think it probable I may visit your mother.'

'Oh, do, Miss !' responded the man, infinitely relieved. She is very bad with rheumatism, and Old Betty Thompson is dreadfully ill in dropsy.'

'I wish mamma had left the store-room key, there is a pile of sugar and sago there. But never mind, Tom, I will do my best for them,' said Nettie, patronisingly.

She went to see Mrs. Brown, and five other poor women, leaving half-a-crown a-piece. Just as she closed the door of the last cottage, a party of farm servants came trooping along, bound for the fair. 'I will follow them,' she exclaimed, and walked breathlessly forward, neither looking to the right hand, nor to the left: the sun poured down his fiery rays, and the breeze whirled great clouds of white dust over her. 'Oh dear!' she moaned, 'I do wish grandpapa's carriage would pass.' She walked a short distance further, then sunk exhausted under an hawthorn tree. 'Oh, deary, deary! I am so tired, what shall I do?' Morpheus was passing, he touched the weary eyelids, and she fell gently backward into sleep.

'Miss Nettie, whatever are you doing here?' cried a rough, ruddy-faced lad.

She jumped up, and exclaimed, 'Teddy, Teddy, I am so glad you have come. Was I asleep?'

'Yes, Miss.'

'Had you to awaken me?'

'Yes.'

'I want to go to Kendal. Is it far?'

'A longish bit to walk.'

'Oh, dear!'

Teddy looked compassionately at the small feet, and blue kid slippers. 'I'm in a fix,' he thought, 'if I leave the little lady here, Sarah will get into trouble; and if I go back without delivering the milk, ten to one I get notice. He paused for a moment, then inquired, 'Where is Lister, please, Miss?'

'At Sandside.'

'And your mamma?'

'Is there also.'

'Your papa?'

'With mamma.'

'The other gentlemen?'

'Uncle Joe has gone to Windermere.'

'That's how Sarah comes to be gossiping with my mistress. She'll catch it when I get home.' A bright idea suddenly struck him. 'Will you ride with me in the milk cart?' he questioned.

'Yes, please.'

'I'll take care of you,' he said, lifting her tenderly up.

'I am so thirsty, Teddy, can you give me a drink?'

The lad filled a tin measure with milk and held it to her lips.

'Thanks, it is very nice, please drive on.'

'Gee-up lass,' he shouted, and away they went. All trouble was forgotten. Nettie confided to him the object of her excursion, and Teddy recommended various shops.

'I would go with you myself; but am forced to serve out the milk,' he said.

'Where must I wait?'

'Under the clock at the Town-hall.'

'Will you be long?'

'About an hour. See, that's the shop.'

Nettie got down, and went in. 'I want one pound of your best tobacco.'

The shopman handed a chair, and inquired 'What price, Miss?'

'I do not know; let it be very good.'

'Certainly. Anything else?'

'A meerschau.'

'A cheap one?'

'If you please.'

'Where are they to be sent?'

'Miss Singleton, Holly Bank.'

The man bowed, opened the door, and said 'the carriage is not in sight.'

'It is all right. Good afternoon.'

She crossed the road. A woman was sitting on a four-legged stool; in front of her hung an umbrella wrong side

up, filled with caps. Mrs. Rudd's millinery establishment was not extensive, nor her goods stylish. A cap made of washing net, with cherry-coloured bows, was suspended from the handle. Nettie noticed it. That will do nicely for Ruth; I will buy it. 'What is the price of that cap?' she asked.

'One shilling and sixpence.'

'Will it wash?'

'Yes, and make up again like new.'

'Send it to Miss Singleton, Holly Bank.'

'I have no one to send with it, Miss.'

'Do you know the milk boy from Daisy Farm?'

'Very well.'

'Could you give it to him?'

'Certainly, he passes every evening.'

Nettie handed her two shillings, saying 'Never mind the change, give it to the baby.'

'God bless you; that sixpence will buy his milk to-night.'

A man, shouting at the top of his voice, caused her to pause. 'Here I am,' he cried, 'the real original cheap John from Sheffield. I've not come here to make money, but for the public good. Nobody sells as cheap as I. In this cart there is a cargo of first-class goods: I can supply you with anything, from a needle to an anchor. What, no buyers! have you no money, or no brains?'

Nettie approached cautiously and inquired, 'Have you any silver thimbles?'

'Thousands, my pretty dear.'

'Real silver?'

'To be sure; take that one, and save fifty per cent.'

The child looked mystified. 'What is the price?' she questioned.

'One shilling.'

'I will take it.'

'Sold again, to the bonniest girl in the fair,' cried the hawker, handing her a neat little box.

How fortunate to have found Lister such a beautiful present. Now I will select something for Harry. A shooting gallery and lottery booth stood facing her : they were gay with tinsel decorations and calico flags. The latter was laid out with china, pictures, work-boxes, and musical instruments. A small open case fascinated Nettie : her breath came and went quickly. 'If I have plenty of money to buy that, won't Harry be delighted.'

'What is the price of that razor-case?' she said.

'We don't sell,' replied the man, pompously.

'Don't you?'

'No, Miss; we give away.'

Nettie's idea of man's charity was exceedingly vague, but she felt herself in the presence of 'a power,' so remained silent.

'If you would like the case you may try for it. Shall I show you how?'

'Oh! thanks,' she responded eagerly.

'You see the board with coloured squares. Put a penny on the red, then watch the pointer; if it stops there you will get a prize.'

'The razors?'

'That depends on the number. You will draw something, certain.'

'If it stops on the black?'

'No! it's blank then.'

'What is blank?'

'You have lost, and will receive nothing for the penny.'

'You told me those pretty things were to give away.'

'Each article is given away, but the penny, you know, is to pay expenses.'

'You are very kind,' said Nettie, throwing on a copper : the pointer ran round, then stopped.

'Blank,' cried the man. 'Try again.'

The child flushed and tossed down a second, without success; then a third was risked, and a packet of needles won.

'ou will be lucky yet, Miss ; don't give up,' said the v, professing to sharpen a razor.

ettie glanced at the case. 'I will have them for Harry,' muttered, and continued to drop on recklessly.

lank, blank, blank,' was the man's continual cry, as the y clinked into his box. One hundred times the pointer d, and the coveted prize was not yet won. A group untry folks gathered round, gazing at the excited child. had pushed her hat backwards ; so that the crimson ss, blazing eyes, and compressed lips were visible to all. money in her purse was nearly done, still the maddening f 'blank' went on. At last a tall, venerable gentleman oached ; the crowd parted, respectfully, to allow him ass. He walked to the booth and laid his hand on arm, saying, determinedly, 'Child, come with me.'

ettie looked up, and saw a face rigid and inflexible as . 'Mr. Wallace,' she gasped.

lush,' was the only reply. He led her silently to his age, and told the coachman to drive quickly.

Where to, sir ?'

Holly Bank.'

ow mean, mused Nettie, to take me away from such things ; the money was my own. I only wanted those s for Harry. The child's face burned with shame and on, yet she sat perfectly still. Presently Teddy came er mind : I wonder if he will wait for me. This thought ght the first pang of remorse. 'Mr. Wallace,' she pered softly.

ie Rector moved uneasily, but vouchsafed no response. Mr. Wallace, please.'

Well.'

Did you see anything of Teddy ?

Who is Teddy ?

The milk boy, at Daisy Farm.'

No ! and I cannot allow you to speak to me, Nettie.'

hen they reached Holly Bank the gentleman rang the

bell impatiently. 'Tell Mr. Joe I wish to see him, Tom,' he said.

'Mr. Osborn is at Windermere, but we expect him back by the nine-twenty.'

'I will wait. Tell my man to drive home, then send Lister to me.'

'She is still at Sandside with the family. Will the undermaid do?'

'Yes.'

Sarah came in reluctantly, expecting to receive a severe reprimand. Mr. Wallace merely said, 'Give Miss Nettie some supper, then put her to bed. She is weary: so mind you do not question her.'

CHAPTER X.

TWO WEDDINGS.

'Good evening, Rector,' said Joe, walking leisurely into the room.

'I hope you have enjoyed yourself,' replied Mr. Wallace, pleasantly.

'Yes, thanks, but I am awfully hungry; boating gives a fellow a rare appetite. Come along to the dining-room, we will have supper at once.'

The invitation was cordially accepted; yet Mr. Wallace looked uncomfortable, and scarcely spoke during the meal.

'Have you seen a ghost, sir? or does some parish matter annoy you?' questioned Joe abruptly.

'My nervous system received a shock this afternoon,' said the Rector, struggling to escape his host's searching eyes.

'May I ask what troubles you?'

‘Nettie. The responsibility of that girl, Joe, is something you ought not to have undertaken.’

‘Where is she?’

‘In bed.’

‘What mischief has she committed?’

‘Been to the fair.’

‘To the fair?’

‘I found her there, myself.’

‘Who dared to take the child?’

‘The milk boy from Daisy farm.’

‘A milk boy. What was she doing when you found her?’

‘Gambling.’

Joe shivered from head to foot. ‘Where?’ he gasped.

‘At a lottery booth.’

‘For how long?’

‘I cannot say; it is your place to question. I simply brought her home.’

‘The fault is mine, Mr. Wallace. I gave her two pounds to do what she liked with.’

‘Exceedingly foolish.’

‘I plead guilty, but I wished to test whether she would give, spend, or save.’

‘A dangerous experiment.’

‘I fear so. He then rung the bell, and inquired if any parcels had been sent up.’

‘Two for Miss Nettie, sir.’

‘Bring them to me, Tom.’

The first parcel was opened. ‘Tobacco and meerschaum,’ exclaimed the Rector.

‘This is a singular purchase for a child,’ said Joe, holding up a cap with evident amusement.

The Rector smiled rather grimly, and questioned ‘When will Mr. Singleton return?’

‘I expect him to-morrow.’

‘Then leave the matter to him. She is so high spirited

that reproof from any one but her father will do more harm than good.'

Mr. Singleton arrived about noon next day. Nettie heard her uncle speak to him, and the library door clash. An hour passed, then the trembling child heard her father call 'Nettie.'

'I am here, papa.'

He laid his hand on her shoulder and said, slowly, 'Where were you yesterday afternoon, my child?'

'At Kendal.'

'How did you get there?'

'I walked a little way, then went to sleep.'

'Well?'

'Teddy drove me in his cart.'

'What Teddy?'

'The boy at Daisy farm.'

'Why did you go?'

'I wanted to buy some presents, and spend my money.'

'What did you buy first?'

'Tobacco, and a meerschaum.'

'Who for?'

'Dont Lister; he was so kind to me, papa.'

'What next?'

'A cap, for Ruth.'

'Well?'

'A silver thimble for Ann.'

'Anything else?'

There was a dead silence.

'Speak child,' said Mr. Singleton, sternly.

'A packet of needles.'

'Where did you get them?'

Another pause, and a sob.

'Tell me at once, Nettie, where you got those needles.'

'At a place where there was a lot of pretty things. I put a penny on a big board, then a pointer turned and I won the needles.'

'Did you go purposely for them?'

'No, papa.'

'My darling, how could you be so naughty?'

'I only wanted a keepsake for Harry, papa.'

'Humph! What kind of one.'

'A razor case.'

Mr. Singleton started impulsively from his chair. 'What in the world made you think of them?'

'Harry said he longed for a moustache like Uncle Joe's, so I thought if I could get him the razors he might make one.'

'How much money did you spend at the lottery?'

'I do not know.'

'What have you left?'

'Sixpence.'

'Did you know that you were gambling?'

'No,' she replied, pressing her wet cheeks against her father's shoulder.

Mr. Singleton took the child in his arms and caressed her tenderly. A shade of sadness rested on his features as he said, 'I shall be compelled to punish you, darling.'

'I know that, papa.'

'Give me the sixpence my daughter. I cannot allow you any pocket money again for twelve months. I shall also advertise for a governess to-day, so be prepared to receive and obey her.'

'Yes, papa.'

'Your mamma must be told how naughty you have been.'

'Will it give her pain?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'Oh! poor dear mamma,' sobbed Nettie, her little form quivering with emotion. At last she lifted her hand, and softly stroked her father's face, pleading. 'Forgive me; please forgive me, papa.'

'You must promise not to do so again first.'

'I will never go to a fair any more without permission.'

'That will do. Now go to your own room and humbly beg God to pardon you.'

'Will you ask him to, please?'

'Certainly, I will.'

'When is mamma coming home?'

'To-morrow; you cannot again be left with Sarah. I will not trouble her with these sad doings more than can be helped; for I hope that Christ will give you grace to confess all yourself.'

The child kissed him fondly, and silently left the room.

'Well, Miss Nettie,' said Lister, a fortnight afterwards, 'I suppose your governess comes to-day?'

'Yes, Ann.'

'I am going to leave you soon, dear; but your mamma has promised to let you come to Pudsey next summer.'

'Are you going to get married?'

'Yes, love.'

'When?'

'On Thursday.'

'Will you be called Mrs. Robinson, and live with Isaac?'

'Yes, darling.'

'I hate him,' she responded, after a moment's serious deliberation.

'Hate Isaac, for shame,' cried Ann.

'He is a robber, to take you away.'

'You will think differently some day.'

'I never shall.'

'Wait till you see the pretty white rabbits he is going to bring for Dora and you on Wednesday.'

Nettie vouchsafed no answer, but continued to play with a kitten and ball of worsted until the new nurse entered.

'Good gracious, Patty, how you have made me jump,' laughed Ann.

'Nettie is wanted, Lister, Miss Ward has come.'

'Shall I put on my new silk dress, before I go down?' she inquired.

‘No love, that print is much nicer for a little girl.’

To meet a governess for the first time is always a disagreeable ordeal for a sensitive child. ‘My eldest daughter, Miss Ward,’ said Mrs. Singleton.

Nettie glanced up. ‘The young lady’s sweet, angelic countenance, instantly fascinated her.

‘I trust we may soon be good friends,’ she remarked, offering her hand.

‘I think we shall,’ replied Nettie, slyly.

‘How does my pet and her governess get on, Mary?’ asked Singleton one evening.

‘Very well, I think. Miss Ward told me this morning that she was exceedingly placable, and obedient.’

‘Poor judge of character.’

‘You consider the child wilful.’

‘Not exactly that; still she is her father’s daughter, and we are an obstinate lot from root to branch. Once let a Singleton declare his will and Pandemonium could not alter it.’

‘Gilbert!’

‘It is correct; the fault is hereditary. I have struggled against it from my youth, and the battle is yet unwon.’ He drew a chair up to the table and received his tea from her hand, then added, as if much amused, ‘Miss North and Lister are to be married to-morrow I suppose.’

‘Yes love.’

‘Ann has been a faithful servant, I hope she will be happy. Are any of her relatives coming?’

‘Her father. I told nurse to say we both desired him to stay here.’

‘I have a great wish to see Dont Lister. You did right to ask him. What says Nettie?’

‘She is delighted; Miss Ward has assisted her to decorate the nursery and breakfast room with flowers, and very pretty they look.’

‘There must be no lessons again, till the old man returns home.’

'Nettie petitioned for that yesterday. She told me that Dont did not like book larning, it made him feel reet badly.'

'How quickly the gipsy caught the West Riding dialect. Oh ! by the bye, are we not invited to Esther's marriage; what time is the knot to be tied?'

'Nine A.M. I presume.'

'Well, if ever mortal man needed commisseration, Larkings will this day month.'

'What else can he expect?'

The sun shone on both weddings : Ann's took place at the Wesleyan Chapel, Miss North's at St. Alban's, Ecclestone, Overdale.' Her marriage was the grandest of the season; the church was crowded with spectators, and the bride's vanity was amply gratified with their exclamations at the magnificent display. The guests returned to a sumptuous breakfast, and at one P.M. Mr. and Mrs. Larkings left for Paris.

Time rolled on; the bridegroom ceased to flatter, and Esther became petulant. Theo was frequently honoured with her bad tempers, and Mrs. Singleton with her tears. She complained piteously that her idol was tyrannical, and had a will of his own. During one of these morning calls she spoke with supreme contempt of her husband's tenantry, and his way of dealing with them. 'I have no patience with workpeople and their poverty tales, Mary.'

'If you had been in my kitchen this morning Esther, and seen the number of poor people begging for food, I feel sure your heart would have softened.'

'Were they vagrants?'

'No ! wives and widows of honest working men.'

'Too idle to labour I presume.'

'They are unable to find employment.'

'Because they know you are a simpleton : my kitchen is clear enough. Just after my marriage I had a little bother, for Mr. Larkings, dear lamb, is so excessively foolish and easily imposed on. A woman with a baby in her arms can't

o the back door one morning, and commenced to whine about five children and a sickly husband. I naturally asked why they did not go into the "house," and told her plainly it was the proper place for such as they.'

'Well?'

'The ungrateful creature refused, saying she would have no part from her husband and little ones. I quickly informed her that poor folks had no right to have children.'

'How could you be so cruel?'

'I was not cruel. It is perfectly disgusting to see a cottage crowded with a lot of dirty brats, and their mothers trailing about begging petticoats.'

'Do you never beg of God, Mrs. Larkings?'

'Certainly, the whole human race look up to Him: it is meet and right so to do.'

'And it is meet and right for us, as children of one common Father, to help each other.'

'Oh, I don't object giving a shawl to an old woman at Christmas, and also encourage thrift and industry by having a blanket club, but of course the members know they must pay for each article before they receive it.'

'Have you let the Oaks yet?' asked Mrs. Singleton, anxious to change the conversation.

'No.'

'William was speaking yesterday about taking it.'

'I will neither let, or lease the house to him; pray consider that a final decision.'

'The heir of Burnside will easily select another.'

Little footsteps were heard in the hall. 'Then the door opened, and Dora joyously rushed in.

'My darling,' said her mother in a voice of reproof, that is not the way to enter a room.

'I wanted to tell you, mamma, so much, that granddapa is coming to-morrow.'

'Little girls should speak only when spoken to,' remarked Mrs. Larkings.

‘Mamma did speak to me,’ retorted Dora.

‘Where is your sister?’

‘At Burnside.’

‘Has she not returned with Miss Ward?’

‘No! grandpapa is going to bring her. He says we are to keep Christmas with him. Won’t that be nice;’ and the child danced with delight.

‘Very nice, if you are good.’

‘Mamma, uncle William says Santa Clouse is certain to fill my stockings. Papa has to be Old Father Christmas, and we are to have a peacock pie. I wonder if cook will give me the feathers. Uncle Joe is going to bring lots of pretty things from Leeds. Dandy has to stay and play with me all the holidays.’

‘Is Harry Henderson invited?’

‘Oh! yes, he has written Nettie a big letter, full of dashes and hard words. It has a beautiful picture at the top, and his name at the bottom.’

Mrs. Larkings listened graciously to Dora’s prattle, then said, ‘Will you permit the child to go with me, and I will send her home this evening?’

CHAPTER XI.

OLD CHRISTMAS.

AT Burnside, many old Christmas customs were kept up, and for twelve days tables groaned beneath the weight of silver plate and good cheer; in the kitchen, rounds of corned beef, and steaming coffee were freely served to the poor. Harry Henderson watched with boyish delight the removal of the huge fire-grate in the hall, to make room for an immense yule log. Mr. Osborn attached great importance to this time-

honoured usage, and always had it brought in with considerable ceremony, and lit with a brand from the previous year's log, holding to the superstition that if it went out during the night, ill luck would come to the house. While the yule fire crackled, and sent forth volumes of heat, the Waits gathered on the lawn, filling the air with sweet minstrelsy. Christmas day dawned, the weather was fine, clear, and frosty, the ground carpeted with crisp snow, and icicles glittered like diamonds on the leafless trees. Burnside was filled with young merry-makers, consequently a profusion of wooden horses, brass trumpets, and gaily-dressed dolls were scattered on every floor. Dinner was always served on great occasions in the large banqueting-hall. Mr. Osborn sat at the head of the table, in his hereditary elbow-chair, looking what he really was, a true English gentleman. Magnificent ewers, salvers, and goblets, brightly relieved the snow-white cloths. Yule candles wreathed with ivy shone like stars amidst this gorgeous display. Grace was pronounced, then the butler entered, bearing a massive silver dish containing a boar's head, decked with rosemary, and an orange in its mouth. He was attended by two footmen, one on each side, carrying wax-lights; the pig's head, after a good deal of parade, was given the place of honour, and an enormous sirloin of beef was also allotted a conspicuous position. There were many quaint dishes on the table, evidently traditionary in their embellishments. One pie was profusely ornamented with peacock's feathers, and the beak of the bird was cleverly allowed to be visible. Dora's shout of delight drew general attention to this princely dish. Before the ladies withdrew, the 'Wassail Bowl' was brought in. Mr Osborn said it was the ancient fountain of good fellowship; he then raised the golden vessel to his lips and sent it round to each guest. This emblem of joviality was freely quaffed by the gentlemen, and graciously kissed by the ladies. Dinner over, the hall was given up to the children, and peals of hearty laughter rang through the house. Mrs. Singleton permitted a general rummage on antique clothes-presses, which were soon unmercifully robbed of finery that

had not seen daylight for at least one hundred years, to find suitable garments for a masquerade. Harry Henderson represented Ivanhoe, Nettie, Rebecca of York, Dandy appeared as Robin Hood, and paid due respect to Dora, who trotted about in a tucked-up brocaded petticoat of Kendal Green. Joe was Lord of Misrule, and acted as Master of Ceremony, and the introduction of his motley crew into the drawing-room was the crowning point of uproarious merriment; then followed plenty of kissing under the mistletoe, and the good old games of blind man's buff, hot cockles, and snapdragon. Young eyelids at length became heavy, and without reluctance, the drowsy little ones were carried off to bed. For a few hours the children revelled in dreamland; then awoke, all eagerness for fun and mischief.

'Are you going to skate with uncle Joe this morning, Nettie?' asked Dora.

'Yes.'

'It will be nice, grandpapa says Acre Rigg lake is quite safe.'

'Our party will go to the canal, Harry can cut his name on the ice.'

'I won't go to the canal, and get drowned; Oh! I does hate your nasty Harry!'

'You won't get drowned.'

'Es, I shall, when it is so deep.'

'Not deeper than the lake.'

'It is, I won't go, I won't,' she screamed, commencing, as usual, to stamp and kick.

'Come, children, be quick,' exclaimed Patty, 'your mamma has given permission for you to breakfast down stairs.'

Dora's brow cleared instantly, and putting up her mouth to be kissed, said, 'Don't be cross, Nettie, we will ask mamma.'

Mrs. Singleton listened patiently to their dispute, then suggested, 'Suppose you go to the Lodge, and see Hannah.'

'That will be much nicer than skating,' replied Nettie, 'for Peter will tell us all about the battle of Waterloo.'

'You shall take your old friends a Christmas present, and you may ask Hannah about the toffy feast.'

'Dat is beautiful,' responded Dora, 'may we go dis minute?'

'Can you take care of yourselves, without nurse?'

'Yes, thank you, mamma, Peter and the parrot won't talk when Patty is there.'

The porter's lodge, was a pretty little place shaded by fir trees, and surrounded with shrubbery, a robin perched on a branch of holly warbled a sweet welcome. Nettie knocked gently, and a feeble voice called, 'Come in.'

An aged woman, in a woollen shawl, and mob-cap, sat before the fire, her hair was white as a snow-flake, and the black eyes flashed with almost unnatural brilliancy. She extended her hand eagerly to the children, and said,

'God bless you, my little ladies.'

'How are you, Mrs. Fell?' asked Nettie. Dora put her present down sily, and nestled close to the woman's side.

'Very happy, but in a great deal of pain.'

'Mamma has sent this with her love,' said Nettie, presenting a basket, covered with a spotless cloth.

'Much obliged,' called out the parrot.

'Poll, pretty Poll,' cried both girls, 'How are you to day?'

'Bad with rheumatism, very bad,' screamed the bird, holding up its leg. 'Peter, fetch hot water! there, rub gently! Oh dear! Oh, dear!'

Forgetting all else, they rushed to the cage, and began to feed the captive with apples.

'May we take Poll down?' asked Dora.

'The cage is too heavy for you to lift. Peter is in the out kitchen, please tell him to come, Miss Nettie.'

The out kitchen was a wooden shade, peats were stacked on one side, various tools on the other. Nettie opened the door, and found Fell seated on the root of a tree, with a block of wood before him; in his hand fluttered a helpless chicken, the child guessed its fate, and in accents of terror pleaded,

'Don't, oh, don't hurt poor chickie!'

'I have received my orders, Miss. Six fowls are required for dinner.'

'I thought you loved Jesus,' she gasped.

'So I do.'

'You can't, if you kill pretty birds.'

The man rubbed his forehead meditatively, then looking at the victim complacently, remarked, 'There was a sheet let down from heaven, and a voice cried, "Arise, Peter; kill and eat." 'That's Scripture, Miss, you must not go against it'

A mist fell over her sight, quivering with intense agony, she moaned, 'My pet! my poor little pet!'

Fell laid the dead chicken down. 'I must be in my dotage,' he muttered, 'to let a girl's tears bother my mind. Hannah will be quite upset, she thinks so much of the children. I wish I'd left that fowl alone; but it looked so plump. Well, what's done, can't be undone. I'll pluck, and take them up to the house at once, or else cook will let her tongue run a sight sharper than my dame.'

Passing the front of the lodge, he peeped in at the door, and saw Nettie sitting on a low stool at his wife's feet. 'She's been telling of me,' thought Peter: 'I'm real glad, for Hannah will know best how to quieten her.' Just as he moved away, he heard the question,

'Why have we all to die, Hannah?'

'Because of sin.'

'Whose sin?'

'Adam and Eve's.'

'Lister used to tell me about a beautiful garden; but I cannot understand.'

'Understand what, love?'

'That we must die for their disobedience; I could not help their being naughty, could I?'

'No, dear.'

'I don't want to go into a dark grave. Do you think God would allow me to live always, if I asked Him nicely?'

'Some day, you will be so weary, pet, that you will long to die, and be at rest, even as I do.'

'Please, do tell me all you know about Eden?'

Hannah explained, in glowing language, the decree of death for sin, and of the world's redemption through Christ.

'I do love Jesus; very much,' said Nettie, 'but must we still die and be buried?'

'Yes until——'

'Until what?'

'Christ returns.'

'When will He come?'

Hannah's head had sunk on her breast, but at the question 'When will He come?' she looked up, and revealed a countenance bright as the morning sun. 'Child,' she replied, 'it is not given unto man to know the day, nor the hour, but we are watching, waiting, and longing for His appearance!' She paused, then continued in a triumphant tone, 'He may come this very day.' A wintry ray of sunlight shot in at the window, and rested like a crown of glory on the snow-white hair.

'There is a beautiful light on your forehead,' exclaimed Nettie, 'has it come from Him?'

'Yes; sunbeams, leaves, and flowers, are God's messengers, they say. Let not your hearts be troubled: I think of and watch over you. Be not afraid, I will come to you.'

'That's very nice; I think they must be like letters. When mamma was at Sandside, I could not hear her speak, but she sent me notes on pretty paper, and said "I love my little pet; when I return home she shall have a large wax doll."'

'Just so, Miss Nettie, your mamma spoke to you with pen and ink. Christ speaks to me by flowers.'

'What nonsense you are talking, dame,' exclaimed Fell, entering abruptly, that child is too young to understand such things. He then placed a heavy basket on the table, saying 'I have brought this from the mistress.'

'What has it in?' inquired Hannah, rather flurriedly.

'Sugar, butter, treacle, and I know not what besides.'

'They are for our toffy feast,' cried Nettie. 'Who packed the basket, Peter?'

'Your mamma.'

'What else have you brought ?'

'Oh ! lots of things.'

'When shall we make de toffy ?' asked Dora.

'New Year's Eve.'

'I want it to-day, Peter ?'

'You must keep to the proper night, Miss, or ill luck will follow.'

'Harry and Dandy are going to sweep you the old year out.'

'Tell them, please, to bring clean besoms.'

'You must make the big pan very bright.'

'It shall rival gold.'

Peter was kept busy for some days chopping wood, polishing tins, and beating eggs. On New Year's afternoon he went up to the house, and gave a general invitation to tea for all the children.

'I fear they will tire Hannah ; making the toffy, will be quite enough exertion for her.'

'Lord bless you, ma'am, my wife has talked of nothing else for the last three days. Baking cream cakes and jim-cracks for Miss Nettie's party, has cheered her wonderfully.'

'Then they shall come Fell, and I will commit Russell to your especial charge.'

A merry young crew assembled at Hannah's tea table, when all their wants were satisfied. A large brass pan was hung on the crane, and the ingredients for the coming feast fetched from the pantry.

'Stop, shouted Harry ; the old year must be swept out before that thing is put on.'

'No, it ought not,' retorted Dora.

'Hush, deary,' interposed Hannah, 'Master Harry's way is best ; dust never was a good seasoning for toffy.'

'We shall make a jolly fuss, girls. Shan't we, Jim ?'

'Come, be quick, young gentlemen,' said Fell. 'I side with Dora, and think the sugar and butter business had better go forwards.'

'Give us a few minutes grace, Peter,' they cried, scampering out. The door was soon again pushed open, and the boys re-entered disguised as Guy Fawkes. They swept the hearth, brushed the grates, and made plenty of racket. At last, Fell said

'If you have finished your work, I'll just lift the pan on again. Come, young ladies, draw up your chairs and watch the toffy boil.'

'Will you tell us a tale, Peter?' pleaded Nettie.

'What about?'

'Battles, and those sort of things,' replied Harry.

'Forty-eight years ago last Rush-Sunday,' commenced Fell.

'Rush-Sunday. I never heard before of that festival,' exclaimed James Wilton.

'But we have,' chimed in all the others, 'and Mr. Osborn has promised, we shall spend that day next summer, at his farm in Cumberland.'

'You must go in time to pluck your own rushes,' remarked Peter solemnly.

'Do tell me all about it,' cried Dandy.

'Well, in olden times, on the last Sunday in July, all the people used to strew the church floor, with fresh-gathered rushes, which remained until the next year, when they were taken up and clean ones spread.'

'Do the Cumberland folks keep up that custom yet?'

'Not exactly, Master James; but in my native village, amongst the Lake Mountains, the children still go to tarns and rivers for rushes and water lilies, which they plait into crosses, and wreaths, to hang up in the church, as a remembrance of the days that are past.'

'Do they let them stay twelve months?'

'Oh! no; they are removed on the Monday.'

'Me will make mine into a pretty crown,' said Dora.

'Mine shall be a cross,' murmured Nettie.

'I will carry it for you,' whispered Harry.

'Bonnie lads too often make crosses, instead of bearing them,' remarked Hannah.

'I shan't be Nettie's cross at any rate,' retorted the boy sharply.

'Is the toffy enough, dame?' asked Fell, 'Miss Dora begins to look sleepy.'

'Let me test it,' exclaimed Harry, holding out a basin filled with cold water.

'You want me to drop some in, I suppose?' laughed Hannah.

'If you please'

'Is it good?'

'Prime.'

'Then bring the tins.'

'One for each?'

'Yes.'

A number of dishes were soon filled and placed on a long deal table.

'Where's papa's share?' questioned Dora.

'Don't fear, I have a large China plate ready for him,' responded Peter. 'My share goes to Russell: he is Benjamin.' Fell, as he spoke, took down his lantern and put on a queer coat of sheep skin, then informed the children he was ready to conduct them home.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WHIP HAND.

WE will now lose sight of Nettie for seven years, and take her up again when she has left school at sixteen.

'Your letter appears interesting love,' said Mrs. Singleton.

Nettie jumped up and seated herself before the urn, replying joyously, 'Agnes Chester is charming, mamma, I always love to hear from her.'

'Is she a school friend?'

'Yes, my first.'

'Who are the Chesters? I never heard of the family.'

'Her father is in the navy. Mrs. Chester died two years ago, so Agnes has to live with a married sister, and is very unhappy. Will you allow me to invite her here for the Easter vacations?'

'Certainly; write for her at once, if you wish.'

Miss Chester arrived at Holly Bank one showery April morning. She was richly dressed, and her golden hair carelessly thrown back with a jeweled comb, fell in thick curls below the waist; her figure was faultless, and her face, though pale, possessed an indescribable charm.

'Gilbert, what do you think of Nettie's friend?' asked Mrs. Singleton during that evening.

'She is decidedly handsome, but my judgment regarding ladies is not worth much. A barrister sees thistles oftener than roses.'

'You spend your life for others, and receive little gratitude.'

'Hush, Mary, you are making a sweeping statement. Perhaps in nine cases out of ten you may be correct, but the day before Jack died I was on Circuit, and received your telegram in Court. The desire to rush off home almost mastered every other consideration. Duty, however, commanded me to stay; for, humanly speaking, I stood between a man and the gallows. A fettered prisoner had left himself in my hands: could I leave him to his fate. The struggle was tremendous. Thank God, justice conquered. When I stood up to plead, my boy's wistful face was before me. I know not what I said, and retain no remembrance of anything that transpired until the words "Not Guilty" rung in my ears.'

'Was he really innocent?'

'Yes, of murder; in other respects a villain, both by nature and education.'

'Then you do not agree with Rousseau that man is good, naturally.'

'No more than I consider it requisite for an author to write his manuscripts on gilt-edged paper.'

Mrs. Singleton looked puzzled, then with a laugh said, 'I give up the argument. Where is Harry?'

'In the conservatory, with Dora.'

'He joins his regiment next month.'

'I wish he had entered the Church.'

'He has no vocation.'

'Plenty of young men have lacked that, yet made hard-working clergymen. Beside there are two livings in the family.'

'I was speaking to Sir Thomas yesterday. He said Harry had, by choosing the army, frustrated a long-cherished plan of his.'

'I am exceedingly sorry. Have you granted him leave to correspond with Nettie?'

'Yes, but I told him it was absurd to mention a formal engagement for two years.'

'Perfectly right.'

'Mamma,' said Nettie, bounding in by the window, 'I have been asking Sander's to put some pretty creeping plants against that bare wall I showed you this morning.'

'You will get your own way with him I suppose, but papa and I are going to drive; does Miss Chester accompany us?'

'I will go and ask her.'

'Be quick, or we shall miss the sunset,' exclaimed Mrs. Singleton.

The evening was delicious, and the grand beauty of the mountains seemed to speak like a poem. Agnes was enraptured. 'What a fine old mansion,' she cried, 'it appears a Paradise.'

'We have many such in Westmoreland,' replied Mr. Singleton, highly gratified. 'The family who own that hall, can

ace their descent to a Norman, who came over with the conqueror.'

'Their glory is recorded in Domesday-book, I presume,' said Miss Chester satirically.

'We north-country people, as a rule, cling to ancient institutions; and feel intense pride in looking back to our forefathers.'

'You should claim cousinship with the kilted Highlanders, and wear by the Campbells, or Macphersons.'

'No need to go so far, while a Howard remains, or the Percy's banner floats over Northumberland.'

'Never mind pedigrees,' said Nettie. 'See, we are at home, and I confess to feeling awfully sleepy.'

'Go to bed at once, love,' replied Mrs. Singleton, 'I want you to take Miss Chester, to Burnside in the morning.'

'We will call at Kent View, and inquire if Mr. Larkings' old is any better.'

'Thanks, dear.'

'Whose carriage is that?' asked Agnes, as she put the finishing touch to her toilet next day.

'Mrs. Larkings.'

'There will be no need to pay a visit now.'

'I think not; but do make haste, I wish to introduce you.'

'If she is elaborate, like the armorial emblazonment on her carriage, I shall be overwhelmed.'

Meanwhile Mrs. Larkings, was catechising her cousin regarding Agnes. 'Have you tested her religious opinions, Mary?' she questioned.

'Certainly not, Miss Chester is simply a visitor, I consider her amiable, and well educated.'

'Is she a church woman?'

'I believe so.'

'Believe,' she responded scornfully, 'you should be sure. I can find no excuse for such gross carelessness, the young lady may probably be ignorant, of the very principles of the Christian faith.'

Mrs. Singleton continued silently to arrange a vase of flowers; so Mrs. Larkings proceeded.

‘Popery, Dissent, and Atheism, are making rapid strides; it therefore behoves every married woman, to examine scrupulously the sentiments, both religious and political, of every member of her family.’

‘I leave those matters, Esther, in my husband’s hands.’

‘Poor weak creature; were I to rely on Theo, things would soon be in a pretty mess; I have made him run over the books with me, and how much do you think I have saved, during the last twelve months, by acting bailiff myself?’

‘I cannot guess.’

‘Try.’

‘Fifty pounds.’

‘Why, the man’s wage was more than that: just two hundred and fifty pounds, then the improvements I have made in rents ought to count fifty more at least.’

‘What does Mr. Larkings say?’

‘He acknowledges I am a first-class manager, but I don’t think he likes me interfering with what he calls “his business.” Men, you know, are great stupid things to deal with, and a woman’s only plan is to keep the whip hand.’

‘How did you save the money?’

‘I began by knocking off annual subscriptions. It was heart-rending to look at his list, an infirmary here, and an orphanage there. I was appalled at the extravagance, so faced the difficulty boldly, and refused, in my husband’s name, to give one penny more. Theo was sulky about it for some days, and looked like a boy who has bitters to take; but I stroked him down till he saw I had acted wisely.’

‘Do you experience no annoyance, in undertaking men’s work?’

‘None whatever.’

‘You make me think of Plutarch, he says a new marriage is like a vessel before the hoops are on.’

‘Plutarch was a heathen; I never read such works.’

‘What does Bishop Taylor state?’

‘There is rather more sense in quoting him. As a Churchwoman, I feel bound to respect what he may say.’

‘Well, he warns those joined in wedlock to avoid angry words, and draws a beautiful comparison.’

‘Tush! what is the use of talking such nonsense. I have been married over seven years. Theo and I had our first trial for mastery during the honeymoon.’

‘You interrupted me, Esther. I was going to remark—’

‘Never mind, Mary, I cannot be led by any man: I never felt the slightest tendency for a lord and master, excepting William.’ Here Mrs. Larkings broke down abruptly, and a dark, passionate look fled over her face. ‘To lean for support on a fellow creature,’ she continued hysterically, ‘is a weakness which we English women ought to avoid. I adore Theo, but he is not my master.’

In another minute, the door was gently opened, and Nettie said, ‘Mrs. Larkings, permit me to introduce my friend, Miss Chester.’

Agnes bowed slightly, and took up an album.

‘Is your cough better, Nettie?’ asked her godmother.

‘Yes, thanks.’

‘Do you sleep well?’

‘Not very.’

‘Be careful, child, to wear strong boots, and only eat wholesome food, the Osborns are a consumptive family.’

‘Papa says, I am a true Singleton.’

‘Does he; tell him I consider you are like the Norths, that is the reason I have made a pet of you. Now, good morning, for Mr. Larkings wishes me to drive him to Stavely in my pony carriage this afternoon.’

‘I hope he is better.’

‘Yes; but quite nervous at times, about some kind of a pain at the chest.’

‘Perhaps the air is too keen,’ suggested Miss Chester.

‘Oh, dear, no! nothing of the kind, his system requires bracing, that is all.’

‘What a horrid creature that is !’ exclaimed Agnes, as they cantered through a shady lane, leading to Burnside.

‘Abrupt in manners, but not altogether unkind.’

‘Not unkind ! why, child, Mrs. Larkings is a perfect Tartar. Do let me see her poor husband, I pity him from the bottom of my heart. What a miserable life he must lead, tied to that Amazon !’

‘Mamma says she had a great trouble, when a girl, that made her cold, and suspicious.’

‘Was she crossed in love ?’

‘I do not know.’

‘What a little goose ! I declare the woman’s carriage is coming this road ! let us turn down the lane, on the right.’

‘No, love, grandpapa is expecting us, and he never likes to wait.’

‘How far have we to go ?’

‘Nearly a mile.’

Mrs. Larkings drove past with a gracious smile. ‘I wonder if her husband will dare to eat his lunch, till she returns home,’ said Miss Chester.

‘I believe not,’ replied Nettie. She was right, the carriage stopped at the Lodge. Mr. Larkings came out, and got meekly in.

‘Have you thought me long, dear. I have had an immense deal of shopping to do.’

‘Time always lags, when you are absent.’

‘That is natural, and quite as it should be. Have you taken a proper amount of exercise ?’

‘I glanced in at one or two cottages. Paley’s is needing a good deal of repair.’

‘Surely you have not ordered anything,’ she cried, impatiently.

‘No,’ he replied nervously. ‘No, I have been admiring the improvements you have made.’

Mrs. Larkings thought, during their drive, that her husband was abstracted. I trust he has not made a foolish bargain,

interfered in any way with my tenantry. I must keep my eyes open. She was aroused early next morning by the sound of wood cutting. Jumping hastily up she seized the flax rope, and rang furiously : her own maid answered the summons. 'What is that noise, Maria?' she questioned.

'I don't know, ma'am.'

'Go at once, and ascertain.'

Maria soon returned. 'Well?' asked her mistress.

'Seth Godwin, and some more men are felling a tree,' Mrs. Larkings.

'Which tree?'

'The one near Paley's cottage.'

'Go to the breakfast room, and tell your master I want him.'

'Please, ma'am, he is out.'

'Where has he gone?'

'Mr. Larkings, is watching the tree cut.'

'Watching my beautiful larch cut down. I will attend to that.' She threw a shawl over her dressing gown and rushed out. Theo saw her coming, and tried to assume an air of careless indifference.

'I did not hope to see you so early, Esther,' he said.

'I dare say not.'

'Joseph told me yesterday, that this tree was making his cottage awfully damp, so I am having it felled.'

'How, pray?'

'The branches have spread, and in rainy weather the water is constantly dropping on to the roof.'

'Indeed!' ice could not be colder than Mrs. Larkings's sneer.

'Paley is old, and crippled with rheumatism. I felt compelled to grant his request. Doctor Harris also said it was quite a nuisance that the tree should be done away with.'

'Doctor Harris is a fool to imagine for one moment, that he would allow you to interfere with my property.'

'Esther, you forget the Kent View lands are mine. I intend, from this hour, to be master, and assert my authority.'

'Authority. Pray don't be a simpleton, Theo.'

'Go forward with your work, men,' he shouted.

Mrs. Larkings for one instant stood speechless, then taking her husband by the shoulder gave him a shake, saying 'Go in, sir, and try to recover your senses. He marched off obediently, and the lady directed her attention to the workmen.'

'Come down you Polecat,' she called to Seth.

'It worr the master whoa ordered me, please,' whined Godwin, as he cautiously descended.

'You attend to no orders but mine in future, and mark this,—if any man dare to touch a single bough, of that larch, I will shoot him. Paley, when did you complain to Mr. Larkings?'

'Yesterday, ma'am,' replied the trembling culprit.

'When I was out, I suppose.'

'Yes, the master was afraid you would object; so Seth promised to fell it by sunrise.'

'How dishonourable you men are. Now listen, Joseph: 'This tree shall stand,' and the cottage be pulled down.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONLY A MOUSE.

'ANY visitors, while I have been out, Peter?' asked ~~Mr.~~ Mr. Osborn, one morning.

'Yes, sir.'

'The Rector?'

'No, the young gentleman that Mr. Wallace is teaching to be priest. I told him you were shooting in the woods, so he kindly came into the lodge, and talked a bit to Haannah; my

wife thinks a deal of him, though he crosses her religious views sometimes.'

'In what way?'

'I can't exactly tell, not being acquainted with the Scriptures, excepting a few verses that suit my principles.'

'Be careful, or you will wander from the Church, little differences in faith frequently separate Christians.'

'And against orders, sir,' responded Fell, gravely, 'for we are instructed to be of one mind. I told that to Hannah yesterday, and she replied, "Wait, Peter, till the Master comes."''

Mr. Osborn glanced towards the window, and smiled pleasantly when he noticed Mrs. Fell's happy face against the pane. Nettie and Miss Chester drew up at the moment, and received a warm welcome. When they reached the hall, Harry was standing on the steps, he looked very handsome, Nettie was gratified to see Agnes' glance of unmistakeable admiration.

'You ought to be happy, Nettie,' she whispered. 'What a superb moustache and beard Mr. Henderson has!'

The remembrance of Kendal fair flashed to her mind, causing a rich bloom to mantle cheek and brow. 'What dress do you intend to wear this evening?' she said, hoping to change the subject.

'Blue silk, with pearl ornaments.'

'I have selected a plain, white muslin, looped up with cherry-coloured ribbons.'

'You are too sallow, at present, for white; deep pink, or rose, would have been more suitable.'

'Do I look ill?'

'Very pale, and dark-coloured about the eyes. You ought to go south before winter.'

'Westmoreland is my home, Agnes, I would rather die than leave it.'

'You little enthusiast,' laughed Miss Chester. 'But seriously, darling, that cough wants attending to.'

'Pray don't make such a fuss.'

'I shall speak to Mrs. Singleton. Hark! there goes the luncheon bell!' When the meal was over, they congregated in the drawing-room, cross and listless; a hot collation is always a nuisance at two p.m. Mr. Osborn was old-fashioned in some of his ways, so a leg of mutton, and a joint of beef, were invariably placed steaming on to the table, even in July. Nettie smothered a yawn, opened the window, and looked out.

'Will you walk with me?' asked Harry, coaxingly.

She blushed prettily, and went to get her hat.

They sauntered along slowly, and the story that lovers always tell was commenced, there is no need to repeat, it gets told every day. 'Dandy is coming back to-morrow,' she said, at last.

'He has been away three weeks. It has passed like three hours. I wonder if I ever was so happy before?'

'Officers are always happy and gay,' laughed Nettie.

'Are we? Do you know, child, I have found out a secret?'

'What is it?'

'That my pleasures, and pains, up to this hour, were counterfeits, the real things are now revealed.'

'I don't quite see,' said Nettie, gazing roguishly at a bouquet of roses.

'Indeed, I thought you were in love with some person that is going away.'

'I decline to answer.'

'Do you?' he sighed, and looked fondly down at her. 'Well, I shall not bore you much longer, pet. I sail for India next month.'

'India!' she felt instantly sick and faint, her little hand grasped the flowers tightly. 'I didn't know you cared about travelling,' she murmured.

'I do not: but my regiment have received orders from the powers that be.' He paused, seemingly unable to say more.

'Then must you go?' she questioned gently.

'I must. Will you promise me, darling, not to ask Miss Chester to prolong her visit?'

'Why ?'

'I do not like her.'

'Try, Harry, to conquer the aversion. She is my dearest friend.'

'My wishes ought to come first,' he said, decidedly.

'I cannot treat Agnes coldly: think how lonely I shall soon be.'

'Forgive me, but I fear she is as false as flattery's smile.'

'Oh, Harry! because she is prettier than myself, you are hard on her.'

'I won't say another word. Give me a rose, love!'

'What time is it?' she inquired, handing him a Devonshire.

'Just four.'

'We must return; the horses will be round in a few minutes.'

'I will accompany you, and beg a dinner from Mrs. Singleton.'

'Are you ready to go down, mamma?' said Nettie, two hours afterwards.

'Yes, dear; how sweet you look! that dress fits well!'

The dinner hour was prolonged till close on eight, then Harry grew gloomy, for Nettie had complained of headache, and gone to bed.

'Are you better, dormouse?' asked Agnes, next morning.

'Not much.'

'Shail I draw the blinds up? this subdued light is not good to lie dreaming in.'

'Mamma pulled them down, and she certainly knows what is best.'

'Don't be huffy, I only meant that sunlight would dispel vapours. You live too much in a groove, three months in London, during the season, would do all the good in the world.'

'Uncle Joe is coming for the shooting in September. I have promised to return with him to Leeds. Papa is anxious to consult Doctor Hazlehurst about this tiresome cough.'

'Doctor Hazlehurst is a medical god at Burnside, and Holly Bank'

'He is our hero,' laughed Nettie : 'Question uncle William about his godship.'

'You will be dreadfully dull shut up with an old bachelor.'

'Uncle Joe is not old ; moreover, Miss Ward resides now in Leeds.'

'Your late governess, I presume. What an improvement ! Good advice must abound at Dove's Nest ! Is not that the name of Mr. Joseph's place ?'

'No !' exclaimed Nettie, her temples throbbing painfully.

'Well, I have a profound respect for the lady that taught you writing. I wish you would give me a few lessons !'

'Why ?'

'Because yours is the neatest hand I have ever seen.'

'What nonsense ! mamma says it is a perfect scrawl.'

'It possesses a strange charm to me.'

'What kind ?'

'Peculiarity.'

'Half-formed letters, minus stops. However, I shall be happy to oblige you.'

'Then I am your obedient pupil. Now, tell me more about Miss Ward.'

'She is staying at present with her brother.'

'What is he ?'

'A professor of languages. Maggy tells me in her last letter that he has a book in the press.'

'Literary men are bores, and never to be relied on. "To-morrow," is their motto.'

'Johnson says, Agnes, "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors."'

'Remarkably modest, when he was one himself ; but some folks have a happy knack of chanting their own praise ; others are perpetually quoting Milton ; to tell the honest truth, I have not a grain of patience with a thing that arch-Puritan wrote.'

'Not "Paradise Lost ?"'

'It is hateful, no one with taste would read it through.'

'Fortunately, the keys to our "Poets' Fairyland," do not hang on your girdle.'

'What are you girls chattering about?' said Mrs. Singleton, entering with a cup of tea, and a plate of dry toast in her hand.

'Your invalid is thanking the gods: for shutting the gates of dreamland upon me.'

'How charitable! but come, Nettie, I desire, you to fling romance aside, and do something practical this morning.'

'What, mamma?'

'A girl has just been to tell me Tommy McDonald is dying. I have an engagement that cannot be postponed, you must therefore go, and see the boy.'

'May I accompany her?' asked Agnes.

'With pleasure. Is this your work, Miss Chester?'

'Yes.'

'Are you fond of drawing?'

'Very; but I have never had a really good master.'

'This St. Cecilia is sketched cleverly. I wish my daughter was half as proficient.'

'Nettie is going to finish me in writing. Will you permit me to give her some drawing lessons?'

'Thanks, but I think your hand is a great deal nicer than hers.'

'I don't. Are you nearly dressed, Nettie?'

'Yes, please look if my gloves are in that drawer?'

The girls started on their mission, and came suddenly upon Harry: he was leaning over a gate, apparently staring at the purple hills in the far distance. 'Where are you going?' he questioned lazily.

'To see a poor child, who is suffering from hip-joint complaint. His mother was drunk, and let him fall when only two years old.'

'I know the boy, it will be a good thing if he does die.'

'Oh! Harry.' There was a world of reproach in the tone.

‘My angel, I meant no harm ; think how miserable he must be without health, comfort, or love. There, dry those tears and I will go with you.’

Agnes never spoke, but Nettie noticed a frown on her face, and an ominous light blazing in her eyes. When they reached the cottage, Harry paused and whispered, ‘I will remain here ; so many might upset the poor little fellow.’

‘So will I,’ exclaimed Miss Chester. ‘Don’t be long, Nettie.’

‘Nay, Agnes come in. Tommy loves everything beautiful.’

‘I have a constitutional dislike to sick people ; pray excuse me.’

Nettie cast a sorrowful look at her, then turned without a word, and crossed the threshold where death was waiting to enfold in his dark wing a helpless child. Tommy laid gasping for breath : there was no one with him, still the room felt hot and oppressive.

‘I am so glad to see you Miss. Mabel said you would come.’

Nettie bent down and gently smoothed the pillow. ‘Shall I open the window?’ she questioned.

‘Please.’

She raised the sash, and threw open the blinds. ‘Now drink this, love, I know you are thirsty.’

‘Thank you, it is good.’

‘Mamma made it herself.’

Tommy’s eyes glistened with gratitude. He laid his thin hand on Nettie’s, and looked at her, as if he thought she could help him in this hour of anguish.

‘Where is your mother?’

‘Out, Miss, she finished some lace yesterday and has gone to sell it.’

‘Will she be long?’

‘I hope not.’

Hope is allied to Faith. For hours the lad had patiently

ited for her return. Nettie saw the end was near ; she
nt softly to the door and said to Harry,

'Please take Miss Chester home, and tell mamma that
mmy is dying. His mother is out hawking, so I cannot
ve until she comes in.'

How absurd,' exclaimed Agnes.

Harry bowed coldly as he offered his arm to Miss Chester.
ny more commands, Nettie?' he fondly questioned.

I think not.'

'Then good morning, little nurse ; mind and do your duty.'

'What a capital Sister of Mercy, that demure child would
ke. She ought to join the Nightingale staff.'

There was something in the tone that made Henderson
mson to his temples. 'What do you mean?' he asked.

'That it seems a pity a girl, endowed with a vocation for
iding sick folks, should seclude herself in a little pokey
wn like this.'

'Kendal is an important borough, and famous for——'

'Giving birth to Harry Henderson, one of her Majesty's
ards,' interposed Agnes.

'I am not in the guards ; but I assure you Nettie will
t, as my wife, lack opportunity to cultivate the divine gift
charity.'

'Spoken like an Orthodox Churchman.' She turned and
v her friend still standing on the cottage steps. 'What
object of attraction you must be, Lieutenant Henderson.'
Harry broke a beautiful cluster of white blossom from a
e, raised it to his lips, then flung the spray towards his
y love.

What a pity the days of chivalry are past,' sneered Agnes.
Why?'

Because I picked up this bow of pink ribbon on the
n, Nettie wore it last night.'

Well?'

In olden days you would have begged it for a talisman.'

Yes, if given by the true owner.'

'Well, here we are. How luxuriant the foliage is round Holly Bank.'

Mrs. Singleton was leaning over the balustrade. Harry delivered Nettie's message: she smiled, and said kindly, 'I am glad she remained.' "Will you have some lunch, my boy?"'

'Meanwhile Nettie bent over Tommy's sick bed, whispering 'What can I do to give you ease poor child?'

'I am dry, please let me drink.'

She handed him a cooling draught, and bathed his brow tenderly.

'I want to go to sleep. Don't leave me, Miss Nettie?'

'I will not, love.'

'If my little mouse comes out of his hole, you won't let any one hurt him. Poor, poor, mousie,' he sobbed, 'who will care for you? I wish God would allow me to take you to heaven.'

'Have you fed it to-day?'

'Yes, when mother went out it came on to the bed, and eat besides me.'

'Do you love him?'

'Very much, it is my playfellow; we keep house together. Do you think he will fret for me?'

'I fear so.'

A look of trouble swept over the lad's face. 'Poor, poor mouse,' he moaned, 'who will care for you?'

'It shall never hunger while I live.'

'Then I will tell you how to catch him. Call "bun." When he comes, throw down a bit of cheese and stroke his back softly.'

'Shall I summon him now, then you could teach me how to make friends.' She cried 'bun,' and the mouse soon popped on to the hearth: after a deal of coaxing it consented to nibble a crumb from her hand. While thus engaged Mrs. McDonald entered; she was a young woman with a bloated face, and heavy eyes. Nettie spoke to her

kindly then left, thinking she would like to be alone with her son.

'You have eaten nothing, Tommy,' said the woman with a sigh, glancing as she spoke at the coarse food standing on a small table at his side.

'Yes, I have, Miss Singleton brought me a lot of grapes. Have you sold the lace?'

'Not a yard, though I have tramped eight hours.'

'How will you manage, mother?'

'Bravely, lad. The young lady gave me half a sovereign.'

'God is good,' said Tommy. 'Mother, will you do something for me?'

'Yes, child.'

'Then promise not to touch whiskey again?'

There was no answer. 'Mother, I am dying; let me carry your vow to Jesus.'

'For your sake I'll take the pledge. What more can I do for you?'

'I want a long, quiet talk. Will you undress Flossy and put her besides me, then fetch the milk? Could you spare a penny, mother, for some rich yellow cream, like we used to have when father was hind for Mr. Gilstone at Skettlehill?'

'I can.'

'Don't stay; I am going soon, and have a deal to tell you.'

'Hush, lad! hush; I'll run every step.'

The 'Red Boar' was just opposite, and the gold coin glittered in her hand. She stood for one instant irresolute: whiskey, and a mother's love, struggling for mastery in her heart. Then alas passed in, and Bacchus closed the door.

Tommy slumbered, and awoke. Minutes changed into hours, then night shadows enveloped the room. The boy's thirst became intolerable, and tears damped his pillow. At last the drunken woman stumbled in. 'Mother, mother, give me milk,' gasped the child.

'Whist! whist!' was the mumbled reply, then a heavy fall told him how useless was his plea. Little Flossy, aroused by the noise, crept closer to her brother. Tommy put his arm protectingly around her, then all became still. For another hour the lad battled with death alone. No human words of love fell on his ear, but a tiny mouse nestled on the heaving, agonized breast. The first dawn of morning fell on a lifeless form, for angels had carried the young sufferer to the land of rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIP'S SERMON.

It was Harry's last evening at Holly Bank. Mrs. Singleton had discreetly withdrawn from the library, leaving the young couple alone.

'I almost wish I had entered the Church,' exclaimed Henderson, abruptly.

'You have chosen a noble profession,' she replied, with a flush on her cheek.

'It was your approval that decided me.' He paused for an instant, then added tenderly, 'If I have ever pained will you forgive me?'

Nettie put one hand lightly on his arm, but her heart beat so fast, speech was impossible.

Harry bent down and kissed her forehead. The silence was eloquent enough. 'Will you love me thus for ever?' His words came low and trembling.

'Yes,' she answered, looking up with wet eyes full of worship.

'How often may I write? Would a letter once a week bother you?'

'Oh! no.'

'Now pet, good night and good-by.'

There was one bitter sob, and a shower of passionate tears, then a smile like sun-light radiated her features. 'Pardon this weakness,' she exclaimed, 'from henceforth thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.'

'May Jehóvah protect thee,' he huskily murmured, and thus passed out.

Weary with sorrow Nettie soon fell asleep: the sun was high when she awoke. 'What time is it, Patty?' she enquired.

'Just ten, Miss.'

'I will have breakfast presently. Please lay out my dress, then you may go.'

Nettie descended to the breakfast-room, and was drinking a cup of coffee when Miss Chester entered with Dora.

'What a nuisance,' exclaimed Agnes, crushing angrily a letter she held in her hand. 'I wish those children were at the bottom of the sea,'

'Whose children?'

'My sister's plaguey brood. You can form no idea how I detest being bothered with dirty little fingers playing round me all the time. It is just purgatory.'

'You should make them keep off.'

'How can I?'

'Tell the bairns, what you have told us, and if not perfect imps they will speedily clear out of the way. Children, by instinct, know who loves, and who hates them.'

'It is easy for you to talk. I daresay my nephews are no worse than other boys; but their mother is absurdly indulgent, and expects me to return home, just when the shooting season is coming on, so that she and her precious husband may go comfortably to Paris. I wish to goodness they would take their divine darling with them.'

'I am so sorry,' said Nettie, soothingly, 'for papa has arranged to give us a tour through the Lake district, and uncle Joe will be one of the party.'

'How provoking, but I see no escape. Have you glanced those exercises over?'

'No! where are they?'

'Here,' said Agnes, handing her some neatly written sheets.

'Dora, whose chirography is this?' asked Nettie.

'Yours.'

'No, it is Miss Chester's.'

'Nonsense, every letter is perfect. I could swear to it.'

'I have not got the z right,' said Agnes, thoughtfully; 'another lesson will be needed.'

'Why do you wish to imitate my sister's writing?' questioned Dora suspiciously.

'Because I admire it,' she answered with a laugh.

'I am off to ride. Will either of you go?'

'Who accompanies you?'

'Dandy is due at eleven.'

'I should enjoy another canter, but I must pack, my train leaves at three,' sighed Agnes.

'Write to Mrs. Ford, and say you cannot possibly be with her till to-morrow.'

'Hand me that sheet of paper, Nettie, I will simply send Achilles' words to Agamemnon: "Command thy vassals, but command not me."''

'Capital,' cried Dora, 'Homer is good for alloccasions.'

Next day Miss Chester bid farewell to the Singletons, and in another six weeks Nettie was in Leeds keeping house for Mr. Osborn.

'Guess who I saw in town this morning, uncle.'

Joe tossed down his book, and looked admiringly at his niece. She was laid on a large couch curled up like a soft, white kitten, her blue eyes were beaming with fun, and mischief. 'I cannot imagine, puss,' he replied fondly.

'Guess, sir.'

'Isaac Robinson.'

'No, Trip Hardcastle.'

'What did he say to you?'

'Asked earnestly how my soul prospered, and called me his bonnie Westmoreland lass.'

'Trip is a honest fellow. He might have done a power of good if he had been educated.'

'Then you consider it requisite to educate a man before allowing him to work for Jesus?'

'Hardcastle has taken the matter into his own hands, and says he has received a roving commission: he goes all up and down preaching. I came across him one day giving his boots to a poor blind man, and another time found him carrying twin babies for a beggar woman on the Bradford road. Such men are the glory of Methodism, and prove the mighty working of the Holy Spirit.'

'He used to lead the singing at the Pudsey prayer-meetings. Were you ever at one?'

'No love.'

'I am going to visit his grandmother. Trip said t' owd woman was badly, and wod be deleeted to see me.'

'Are you going to day?'

'Yes, will you accompany me?'

'I cannot, dear, this pile of letters must plead my excuse.' Joe rose and went to a drawer. 'See puss,' he said, tossing her a small paper packet, 'there is two pounds of tobacco for Cressey; she likes a pipe, I know.'

'Give me some tea also, uncle.'

'Oh! bother to tea, you are always drinking Hyson, or dreaming about gunpowder.'

'I don't like gunpowder.'

'Don't you, I am surprised. By the by, won't Henderson be about the end of his voyage?'

'I hope so, if the "North Star" has a favourable passage.'

'Saturnius has not sent the Red Comet any way,' laughed Joe, as

"A fatal sign to armies on the plain,
Or trembling sailors on the wintry main."

'How strange those Pagans were afraid of a comet,' said Nettie.

'Having no knowledge of God, I think it quite natural they should have looked with awe, on so wonderful a manifestation of omnipotent power.'

'I do not wonder that Byron loved Greece.'

'Come, little niece, run off and dress, I must to business now.'

Two hours after, Nettie softly lifted the latch of Cressey's cottage. Owd Granny was nodding placidly in her elbow chair. Everything was clean, and in perfect order. She held her breath, fearing to arouse the sleeper, but while she hesitated, a youngster pushed rudely past her, shouting,

'Hi, Missis, wakken up! I want a penny top.'

'Hush, my boy! Mrs. Hardcastle is asleep.'

'Shoo's allus that, folks as keeps shops, sud hev thear een oppen, or thea'll loss brass.' 'Granny,' he again cried, 'if ye dun'not wakken, I'll tak wat I want for nowt.'

'You will not!' whispered Nettie, laying her hand firmly on the collar of his jacket.

'Giv me a top, then, and tak t'brass yer sen, for I wean' stop.'

Cressey suddenly opened her eyes, and fixed them on her visitor.

'Do you remember me, Granny?' she questioned.

'Come nearer, joy, my sight is dim, t'evening of life is spent, and neet is nigh.'

'What after night, my friend?'

'A blessed morning, Miss, a blessed morning.'

'Without clouds?'

'Hi! wi'out clouds, thank God: bud who are ye? I dun'not know.'

'I used to come here, with Ann Robinson.'

'Isaac's wife?'

'Yes; your grandson calls me t'little Westmoreland lass.'

'I know'a now,' exclaimed Cressey, joyously, 'Trip and me'

hev prayed for thee, choild, monny a year. Hast thou fund Christ ?'

'I have been confirmed,' she responded, rather nervously.

Granny remained silent for a few moments, then slowly repeated those soul-strengthening words. 'Defend, O Lord, this thy child.' 'Ah, Miss! t'Lord hez defended me, t'kingdom wi' golden gates and glorious hills is reet afore my eyes, I see my Father's house of monny mansions, and my heart is filled wi' joy: bud ye, poor bairn, are nob'but starting on t'road, thair are all macks of pits and dykes i' yuh'r path, dun'nut rest on what's done; baptism is needful, and confirmation is gud: aar ministers' prayers too'ers of defence: bud joy, if ye mean to be safe, seek Christ for yer sen; seek, fend, and then hod ast tul him, while life lasts.'

'Has God always been good to you?' asked Nettie.

'He has that.'

'Will you tell me your history?'

'It's a long story, honey, I've been a pilgrim to t'land of promise sixty years come Pudsey feast.'

'I thought you were much older.'

'I is, bud t'fust eighteen years was spent i' Egypt, makking icks for Pharaoh. I was a hee adstrong lass, and t'Lord had flog me well, afore I'd come out and dwell wi' Israel. hen I'd passed through t'Red Sea, I kept leuking back, thou ows, craving for t'flesh pots; bud suddenly a greeat moighty t broke into my soul, sin then, I've allus bided God's time, d dwelt patiently i' t'wilderness.'

'Have you felt sorrow?'

'I hev that, bud I clung to t'rock, and nivver let goa.'

'Trip must be a great comfort?'

'He is,' replied Granny, smoothing down her apron. 'Hast h heeard him preach?'

'No.'

'Wod yuh loike?'

'Very much.'

'Goa then, to Balsey Chapel, next Sunday, it's nob'but four

mile frae Leeds, and a pleasant walk, he is bawn to improve t'death of Mrs. Dobson.'

'In the morning?'

'Noa, t'evening service, Betsy wur a pious woman for monny years.'

'I will ask my uncle to take me, Cressey.'

'Do, Miss, thear will be a rare meeting at efter.'

'I will go, if possible, and pop in next week, to tell you about it.'

Nettie had to coax, and plead prettily, before Mr. Osborn consented to take her. 'What time must I order your ladyship's carriage round?' asked he, the following Sunday afternoon.

'Half-past five, please.'

She drove steadily, and a little after six, drew her ponies up before a plain, neat-looking chapel. They were politely shewn to a comfortable pew, and soon afterwards Trip entered the pulpit with calm and dignified composure. He gave out a hymn, prayed, and read the lessons. The sermon followed, and Joe soon detected germs of natural oratory, which he mentally compared to a garden of beautiful flowers, choked with weeds. Hardcastle preached, of course, in the West Riding dialect, but the chink of genuine metal told that his religion was no sham. When he spoke of the conversion of the sister who had lately passed away, his whole face blazed with enthusiasm. Suddenly, pointing to the body of the chapel, he shouted, 'Woman, where are ye to-neet; not weeping, and wailing down thear. I moind the time though, when ye pleaded for mercy i' tones that sent t'life-blood curdling to my heart,' then raising his gaunt figure to its full height, he exclaimed, 'How monny are present who can bear witness to Betsy's distress! James Simpson, yuh saw her trembling and crying for pardon, wi' t'glow of hell-fire afore her ees! Who were it that bid her goa home because her heead were recking? What did sho reply? "I'll not leave till Christ forgives me." Bud t'door seemed shut, no

answer came ; neet wore on, our strength gave way, still sho nivver moved, so at t'last I said to a leader, "Stop yuh here wi' her, while I goa to fend more praying men." I went, and just as I got to t'west loin, heeard them strike off a hymn. I rushed reet back, and fund while I'd been seeking mon's help, Christ His'sen had stepped in, and saved t'sinner. Thus, my brethren, i' t'words of Scripture, we can say, "Paul plants, Apollus waters, bud God gives the increase." '

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOOSE FEAST.

'WHAT moight yuh think to Trip's sarmon?' asked Cressey on Nettie's next visit.

'It was original and impressive. Do all Wesleyans preach so?'

'Not allus : pride and sich loike muckment hez stolen i'tull Israel, and slecked fire out.'

'Has the Vicar of St. Cuthbert's ever called on you?'

'Hi, twice.'

'Do you like him?'

'Middling. I went one neet to hear him preach wi' Sally Thompson. Sho's a fearful great Chaucerite yuh moind.'

'Did the sermon please you?'

'Noa.'

'How was that?'

'Why'a, he talked all macks of stuff up i'pulpit ; but I choined to be deaf, thank God for it.'

'Then you differ from a little child who went lately to the Vicarage, and asked to see the parson. "What do you want my dear?" inquired Mr. Chaucer. "I have brought

you a kitten, sir." "What kind of one?" "A Unitarian." "Take it away, I don't want a cat." In a few days she went again, and said "I have brought you a kitten." "Did I not say 'No' to you last week?" "Yes, sir, but puss is not a Unitarian now; she has got her eyes open and is an Episcopalian."

'I lay he wod tak it in then; bud soa monny shepherds fare maddles folk.'

'They do Cressey,' and across her mind flashed old Hannah's words, 'Wait till the Master comes.'

Nettie went straight home and found a letter from Harry lying on the hall table. She broke the seal with shaky fingers, and saw it commenced,

'Dear Nettie,

'I left Nusseerabad with my Regiment on the 14th of November. After a march of fifty days we arrived at Asseerghur on January 2nd. Cholera followed our steps, and at Peshawur, or as Europeans term it, "The valley of death," we lost thirty men. I was glad when Asseerghur came in sight, for the roads were fearful. This is a fortress, built on the top of a high hill 3000 feet above the level of the sea. The only access for traffic is a zig-zag road three miles long; the other way is a steep path from top to bottom of the mountain; both are cut in the solid rock, so you will easily understand that the precipice is awful. The scenery is wildly grand, and in the jungle tigers are not rarely seen. My quarters are an old mosque, with curious towers, verandah, and flat roof: it is quaint, but exceedingly pleasant. I can see a distance of forty miles, over steep hills, right away to the burning plains. Up here there always a cool, refreshing breeze: after being scorched for months, you may guess how good it is to me. I am waiting for home news; please write, and send plenty of periodicals also. With kinds regards to Mr. Joe Osborn.

Yours truly,

HARRY HENDERSON

A knock startled her from her blissful reverie. 'What do you want, Pattie?' she questioned pettishly.

Her maid silently presented salver with card.

'Tell Miss Ward I will be down immediately.' She found her friend seated at the drawing room table, cutting the leaves of a new book.

'You look tired, Nettie, have you been walking far?'

'Only to Cressey's. I am going to Pudsey next Friday; will you accompany me?'

'With pleasure.'

'How is Mr. Robert's book getting on?'

'Splendidly,' he says: 'but I feel a little fidgety?'

'Why?'

'I really have no reason, except an unaccountable aversion to the journeyman printer.'

'How strange?'

'Yet these mysterious terrors are often safeguards, if used with charitable discrimination.'

'What do you mean by charitable discrimination?'

'To avoid, without injuring the object of your dread.'

'That is like papa's adage. "If a dog bites you once keep out of its way."'

'Who prints?'

'Barnton and Co., Lexton.'

'I understood the work was to be published in London.'

'Published love, but not printed.'

'What made him select a Lexton firm?'

'Mr. Barnton offered good terms.' Joe Osborn entered at the moment, and welcomed Miss Ward cordially. 'I have just left your brother; he tells me his new book is to be out next month.'

'We hope so. Do you know Barnton?'

'No, but a friend of mine says he is a good natured go-ahead sort of fellow.'

'I am so glad, uncle, for Grace is having night-mare about one of the printers.'

'How can he affect her?'

'She fears he will in some way injure her brother.'

'What is the man's name?'

'Cain Pawkins.'

'I know the fellow. He led a procession of Temperance children last week, and sung with apparent zeal, "Onward, Christian soldiers."'

'He is a professor of religion then,' said Nettie, 'so you have no need to be afraid, Grace.'

'Not so fast, little niece. Remember it is written, "Not all who preach and teach in my name." But I believe Pawkins is an excellent workman, and of course he has nothing further to do with Robert's book. Have you ladies arranged about Pudsey? Robinson has been in town this afternoon. He says Dont Lister, has been agate of t'garden all week, clearing deea'd leaves, and sich loike muck frae t'walks. Ann is making spice cake.'

'Will you go with us, uncle?'

'Certainly, having a decided weakness for a Pudsey Goose Feast. Hospitality, Miss Ward, is the finest trait in Yorkshire village life. T'bite and t'sup is seldom denied; come for'ards and mak yer-sen at hoam is the general salutation. Some years ago I was staying with a college chum, near Calverley, early one morning we set out on a walking tour; near noon I began to feel desperately tired, and ferociously hungry. A small village came in sight, so we pressed eagerly forward, anticipating a good dinner at the inn; but like many another hope in life, it was doomed to disappointment. No hotel or place of entertainment could we find: in fact the people seemed all asleep, or working in the mills, for keys were left in locks on the outside of the doors to show the family were out. Charley at last darted across the road, and pushed open a cottage door that stood ajar. "Mother," he called to an aged woman who sat knitting on a three-legged stool before the fire, "I's fare clamming for a sup of tea, will ye give me a cup?" "I will that lad, come thee ways in; t'kettle is om'ost boiling. Is yon chap thi

mate?" "Hi! we started for Ilkley this morning." "Poor things, yuh mun be pined; I'll brew a grand pot of tea, and fry a rasher of bacon." She had never seen either of us before; yet the best in the house was given, and payment indignantly refused.'

'Dear! old lady. Then we go on Friday, Grace.'

'Decidedly love. What time must I be ready.'

'At ten; the Listers dine early.'

Friday morning was clear and bright. After a delightful drive Nettie stood once more in Dont's kitchen. 'God bless thee joy, thou's as welcome as a gilly-flower,' were his first words of greeting.

'What about my ponies, Lister?' asked Joe.

'Tak yur time Mister Joseph, Isaac will be coming e'now; he'll see to t'hosses. I reckon aar Ann has been flar'ing up ovver his shirt front. Sho mud as we'll hod her din, for he's gaffer now, and mules weant be driven.'

'Don't trouble, I will run them down to the "Crown" myself.'

'Yuh moant.'

'Why?'

'Isaac wod be ill o'fended: leuk, he's coming now all of a reek. 'Where's Ann?' cried Dont, testily; 'hesn't sho done fettling yet?'

'Long sin; bud sho's busy, faather.'

'What wi?'

'T'dinner?'

'Dinner?'

'Hi! ye hed best be walking on.'

'Walking we'er?'

'To aar hoose. Ann's fair sick to see Miss Nettie.'

'And sho may bide sick,' said Lister, stamping his foot, 'Hev ye roasted yur goose?'

'For sure.'

'We sal eat our's lad in ten minutes.'

Robinson looked perplexed. 'What mun I do?' he asked.

'Tak them hosses down to t'Crown ; then goa and fetc ~~the~~ thee wife here.'

'Sho's been tewing hersen all t'morning getting out t'b ~~est~~ table clouts, and china, for we quite expected ye to dine ~~wi'~~ us. All is grand ; a'most ivvery dish set off wi' parsley.'

'Ann's a foil ; flowers are t'things. I gathered a gr ~~eat~~ bunch last neet for t'middle of aar table.'

'I cudn't get ony.'

'Thou sud hev looked out i'time. Wind'e plants kee ~~p~~ i' bloom all winter, if taken proper care on.'

'Yuh hev'n't cut mother's Fu'shos, and Ge-raneys ?'

'I hev, and I lay a shilling thou nivver put thee nose to owt as grand i'thee loife. Harks't, Ruth's coming down stairs wi' t'ladies. Tak the'sen off, and be sharp back wi' Ann.'

'I'm loike a mon going atween two fires wi' gunpowder i' his pocket,' groaned Isaac ; 'one rang step and I sal get blown up, for t'owd chap hez fare setten his moind ~~on~~ heving t'quality at his hoose. I wish Ann wod hev gon ~~ce~~ peacefully to t'dinner, and made our stir at efter ; it wo ~~ld~~ hev been more i' t'Scripture way I reckon.' He deliver ~~d~~ Dont's message rather nervously, fearing a tempest of words ~~;~~ but wives in these days are easily deceived, with a fe ~~w~~ compliments to personal appearance. Robinson, therefor ~~e~~, spoke judiciously, and Ann graciously consented to do ~~as~~ her father wished. 'We'll hev a comfortable day, my las ~~s~~, he said, 'and thou sal invite t'ladies to visit thee for ~~a~~ week. It's Missionary Anniversary next Sunday, we'll he ~~v~~ a rare feast of our awn then ; a bit of roast goose ne ~~er~~ comes rang to me, th u cooks it so grand.'

The Lister's dinner was a real substantial Yorkshire on ~~e~~. Joe noticed a large plate on the fender, and that Do ~~nt~~ kept piling it with beef, goose, and savory pudding.

'Jacob Holt is nobbut badly,' Ruth said at last, 'he ~~ll~~ feel mad, if we mis ~~ed~~ sending him a bit of all that's goin ~~g~~, t'poor chap seems fearful dowld sin Peg de'ed.'

'Is Peggy gone?' questioned Nettie.

'Hi! sho liggid a long time i' bed, bud Jacob was uncommon gud to her; he's nivver leuk'd his'sen sin.'

'I nivver seed ony body sided by nicer i'my loife,' remarked Isaac; 'coffen wur oak, covered wi' a bit of gud cloth. One of t'Itinerants wur thear his'sen, and gav out a hymn both at t'door, and grave-side.'

'Peggy cudn't hev wished for more than that,' said Ruth. 'How monny sorts of cake wur thear for t'tea?'

'Jacob told me he'd orderd fifteen, wi'out Queen's and cheese tarts, bud I nee'er counted.'

'It wod hev been bad manner'd if thou had, lad.'

'I went wi' him about t'head-stone yesterday,' interposed Dont.

'What mack of one did ye choose?' exclaimed Ann, with evident zest.

'A cross.'

'A what?' cried Ruth.

'A cross, lass, and her name put on i' gold letters.'

'Weear's t'verse to come, I'd loike to knowa?' growled Isaac.

'I mentioned that, bud it wur noa use talking; he's bawn to hev his own name cut too, for flaid his nevvvy begrudges t'brass when he's dee'ad.'

'I nivver heeard owt to marrow that; t'owd chap must be maddling, or else t'Papists hez gotten hod on him.'

'Gilbert Middleton persuaded on him, he's allus pictur drawing.'

'Is that Squire Middleton's son?' inquired Joe.

'Yes, sir, he's nobbut a flour-head at best, t'Squire mun rue sending him to Oxford.'

'They none speak proper English at that schule,' muttered Isaac.

'That's true, lad, I was up at t'Grange one day, and heeard sich an a gibber-jabbering going on i' t'library, it wur enuff to deefen a-body. I axed t'hoosemaid whativver it wur?' 'Only

Maister Gilbert reading Latin,' sho said. 'Devilment loike that nivver prospers, and I's fair capped at his faather letting t'lad go on i' that fashion.'

'Don't you approve of education?' questioned Joe.

'Noa, sir, it's doing o'er much mischief.'

'I can't agree with you.'

'It's best grave-digger i' all England.'

'How can you prove that?'

'By t'bairns' deeaths i' t'newspapers. Mothers cram larning down theear throats, and choke them wi' science; when I wur young, folks hed stronger heeads, and wern't so easily fooil'd.'

'What do you consider proper diet for a child?'

'That jest depends, giv a lad plenty of bread, beef, and yale porridge; a lass, milk, cake, and batter-pudding.'

'Would you give a girl no flesh meat?' asked Miss Ward.

'No, ma'am, I hev allus upholden Scriptur, particularly where it refers to keeping women down. I began wi' Ruth, t'day we wur wed, and hev carried out t'same principle through loife.'

'Has your system worked well?' said Joe, gravely.

'Verry, sir, now't givs a mon more pleasure nor to feel he's maister on his own hearthstone.' Dont paused, and looked up at the heavy oak beams. 'Do yuh moind axing me, Miss Nettie, what wur in them eight canvas bags?'

'Yes, Mr. Lister.'

'Say Dont joy. What did I answer thee?'

'You said I should know sometime.'

'And I'll keep my word, they're money bags, and hod thirty years' savings.'

'They might get stolen,' remarked Joe.

'I's none afraid, sir. Pudsey folk, as a rule, don't go thieving, and a tramp wod nob'but think them onion bags. Ruth hangs thyme and margaram rand about.'

'It seems a pity, Lister, to let so much capital lie idle.'

Dont smiiled grimly. 'I've heeard speak about three and a half per cent,' he said. 'When my grandfaather de'ed, I comed

in tul a bit of brass. One morning, I put it i' my pocket, and set off crawling loike a banty cock to Billingsford, and benked ivvery penny.'

'That was prudent.'

'Soa I thought at t'time, bud i' six months my moind changed, and I went to draw it out. I fund t'shutters up, and a crawd rand t'door.' "Maister," I said to a chap, "How mun I get in for my brass?" He roared out a fearful oath: such wur my lesson, and it sarved for loife.'

CHAPTER XVI.

"CASTLE RUSHON."

ONE evening, rather late, Robert Ward ran into the printing works of Barnton and Co., carrying a small roll of paper in his hand. 'I have brought the proofs,' he said to a good-looking young gentleman.

'All right, sir.'

'When will the next be ready?'

'We hope to forward more on Saturday.'

'I am exceedingly anxious to see the book out; it ought to have been finished by this.'

'We are aware of that, but have been working day and night lately.'

'Depression of trade does not affect you, it appears.'

'Not much; God helps them that help themselves, is my motto: our firm is always on the alert to earn a shilling.'

'What think you to "Castle Rushon," Mr. Barnton, will it pay?'

'I shall make it.'

Robert looked enquiringly at him, there was not much in the words, but a great deal in the tone, and a vague fear of danger

came over his mind. 'Have you any idea when the work will be ready for publication?' he asked, hastily.

'Probably next month; binding, you see, will take a little time.'

'Only a few days.'

'Just wait a moment, Pawkins may not have gone home yet.' 'Ben,' he said to the errand boy, 'go and see if the foreman is in the printing office, if he is, tell him to come here.' 'Cain is a thorough Christian, and a capital workman, Ward. I believe that fellow possesses patience to serve forty other men.'

A heavy foot sounded on the stairs, and Pawkins made his appearance. He was rather stout, with thick neck, and sleek brown hair, that curled up at the back like an infant's of twelve months old, his face was an out and out hang-dog one, every feature being stamped, 'Arch-hypocrite.'

'Mr. Ward wants to know, Pawkins, when his "Castle Rushon," will be done?'

'Types are full, now, sir, we are going on as quick as possible.'

'Can you finish printing in a fortnight?'

'I fear not.'

'You might, if full pressure were put on.'

'Pawkins shook his head.'

'Come, try, Cain, and you shall have a *douceur* when the book is out,' said Birnton, good naturedly. 'Are the covers going forward?'

A quick glance flashed between master and man. 'I am unable to say, sir, Mr. Squerrel binds.'

'Just so; have you plenty of matter?'

'I shall be glad if Mr. Ward will let me have the remainder of manuscript this week.'

'Are the sheets likely to run short?'

'About ten pages. May I offer a suggestion?'

'Oh, certainly! speak out.'

'The interest of the tale would be greatly increased, by Mr.

Ward adding another chapter, to elaborate more fully the two striking characters.'

'I shall not do that,' replied Robert, decidedly.

'Have you finished the manuscript, Ward?'

'Within a few sheets.'

'Then let us have preface, and title page to-morrow. We will dash ahead, now,' said Barrington.

'I will. Good evening.'

Barrington heaved a sigh of relief. 'Thank goodness, the fool has gone,' he gasped.

'Yes,' sneered Pawkins, 'and I have taken into consideration.'

'Bosh to your considerations. I shall have plenty of them before the night is out. Where are the partners to meet?'

'In Squerrel's office; it is nice and private.'

'What hour?'

'Nine.'

'I have just time to wash, and drink my tea. Will you take charge of the books, keep things quiet, Cain, and I promise to take care of you.'

'Mine is a hard case.'

'It might be worse.'

'Think of my character.'

'Confound your character, mine must go to the dogs.'

'Better have taken my advice, sir, and done things with care. The trade is suspicious of us now.'

Barrington bit his lips, and clenched his hands. 'Let the blow fall when it will,' he exclaimed, 'I feel like a man clinging to a rotten plank with a raging sea around.'

'Young men often experience such morbid sensations,' roared Cain. 'I used to be troubled with them myself.'

'I never should have suspected such weakness in you,' responded his master with supreme scorn.

'My heart was once soft like jelly.'

'How did it turn to adamant then?'

'I crushed out every gentle emotion.'

‘What a pity.’

‘A married man’s first duty is to attend to the affairs of his family.’

‘Financially, I presume.’

‘Just so, according to the teaching of nature a Christian is justified in securing comforts for his offspring. For instance last Sunday, I was in the country, and came upon a nest of young sparrows. Presently the parents returned with food for their brood. From whose barn did they abstract those grains of wheat?’

‘How the d—l do I know.’

‘It is a matter of immense interest to me: a thousand times this week I have communed with my own heart, and found great consolation from their conduct; for I reason, if birds of the air appropriate what they require for themselves without question, why should I hesitate to do the same?’

‘A capital argument, but it won’t stand.’

‘Why not?’

‘Some ugly words dance before my eyes, and scorch my soul.’

‘What are they, sir?’

‘Thou shalt not steal.’

‘A strong command. Still I think it can be qualified.’

‘You consider that ends justify means.’

‘Exactly.’

‘I wonder, Cain, how you have managed to keep out of jail?’

‘By discretion, and calm calculation.’

‘Still our affairs are bad. We shall have to engage a solicitor, and I fear one will be difficult to secure.’

‘You can pay, I suppose?’

‘Money is not all, for you know solicitors cling to their honour, like shell fish to a rock.’

‘There are exceptions.’

‘Of course, every profession has its black sheep, just as the Apostles had a Judas amongst them.’

Pawkins smiled sarcastically, and remarked, 'we will talk it over with Squerrel.'

'Don't forget those papers.'

'I have taken things into consideration,' began Cain ; But Barnton sprung forward like a panther, and seized him by the shoulder.

'Confound your considerations,' he exclaimed, passionately. 'Why do you exasperate me with those hateful words? Your diabolical calculations, have ruined me, body and soul.'

'Hush!' cried Pawkins, livid with rage ; 'remember our standing in the Church. I wish to keep straight there.'

'I know that, you canting hypocrite. Hark! what is that?'

'A knock at the side door.'

'Go answer it.'

Cain went, and a man about Barnton's age stepped in. 'It is past nine,' he said. 'What has detained you?'

'We have been talking things over,' responded Pawkins, hastily.

'What ails you, Sandy?' asked Squerrel.

'I'm in for ague.'

'Go to bed at once, old fellow, and I'll try to push on for a day or two.'

'No time like the present, gentlemen,' interposed Cain ; 'it is only derangement of nervous power. Mr. Barnton will feel better when his mind is relieved.'

'The chap's about right. I will go home for a few minutes, and then join you again.' Half an hour afterwards he entered the office of Squerrel ; Hare and three men were seated at a long table, covered with green cloth. 'Good evening,' he remarked, 'I presume you are aware why we meet to-night. Twelve months ago our business was prosperous : then came a reaction. I hoped to pull through but failed. We are completely wrecked, and it must be now, every man for himself.'

'And God for us all,' groaned Cain. 'I have been lead—'
continued Barnton, 'so let the whole blame fall on me.'

'Nay, Sandy, share and share alike, that's the fairest,' cried Squerrel.

'Silence, until we know what our head proposes,' said Pawkins.

'To save you, Squerrel, I suggest we dissolve partnership, and Cain shall appear as a creditor.'

'Good, very good,' replied Pawkins. 'I agree to that—
how must it be arranged?'

'The bill of sale is rather baffling,' exclaimed Barnton.

'You could secure me, sir.'

'No doubt, "Castle Rushon" would be a rich plum.'

'It's a splendid book, I'll take it. But how about Mr—
Ward?'

'That is the difficulty.'

'He appears a careless, inoffensive man,' remarked Hare.

'Inoffensive enough, but there will be thunder if he gets
a whiff about this'

'Would it be advisable to give a hint to test his pluck?'
enquired Squerrel.

'Yes, if you wish to bring law upon us; for I know
Robert Ward will never hide dirty work.'

'Keep him in the dark, till the smash comes, then.'

'And as long afterwards as you can.'

'I'll risk anything for the book,' laughed Cain; 'but if
there is likely to be danger, add a few other things to cover
expenses.'

'A thousand copies was the number ordered. How many
more have you drawn off?'

'That question, would be better unanswered.'

'I dare say, an honest fellow like yourself may be trusted.'

'The author is under an obligation to us, for I have
worked hard to make him a name in the literary world.'

'To do so, the trade must be kept well supplied.'

'I'll attend to that, sir.'

'I presume you are calculating on pocketing all proceeds.'

'The labourer is worthy of his hire.'

'Quite correct, but "Castle Rushon" must be a joint-stock affair,' said Squerrel.

'Decidedly,' echoed Hare.

'You have the profit on binding,' responded Pawkins.

'Profits on a thousand volumes! what nonsense!'

'Yes, on a thousand, but we might make arrangements for the whole.'

'Am I to understand that it will take some time to exhaust the first edition?'

'Certainly; but we will bind as required. Can you find room for the sheets?'

'I'll store them away safe enough; but mind, our new firm won't stand responsible. Was there any written agreement Barnton, between Ward and you?'

'No; the fool trusted to my honour; and, by Jove, I don't like to riddle him thus.'

'It will be a useful lesson,' whined Pawkins, 'young men in these days are prone to be careless.'

'The great question is, How we must get the book for ourselves, without trouble,' remarked Hare.

'I'll appear as a hard-working man, who has lost his savings,' said Cain.

'Ruined by me,' chuckled Barnton.

'I threw in a considerable sum, sir.'

'Did you! Well, we will work it this way. I have printed a book.'

'It is not finished yet,' interposed Pawkins, rudely.

'Silence! "Castle Rushon" is complete. We must say, I borrowed one hundred pounds of you, and could not repay it; so made the book over, as security.'

'Without reserve, sir?'

'Of course.'

'Very good: I will go to-morrow morning, and consult a suitable solicitor.'

‘ Who ? ’

‘ Mr. Mark Hedgeway.’

‘ The right man in the right place,’ exclaimed Squerrel.

‘ We will go together, for our interests are one.’

CHAPTER XVII.

COPYRIGHT.

‘ WE shall make a good thing out of that book,’ thought Cain, as he hurried home, ‘ and the quicker I come into possession the better. Mr. Ward is a proud, haughty fellow, but the aristocracy mostly are. It is a great pity about copyright. If Barnton had only managed to keep the manuscript in our own hands, it could have been done easily. Signatures are occasionally put to documents without permission ; but I must be careful, and let circumstances guide me. The first thing will be to see Ward, and urge him to finish the tale. Two thousand copies can soon be bound ; the rest will do afterwards. Squerrel apprehends a row, and should the author go to law we must yield. I wish the work was done, and safe in my own house.’ He walked on more briskly, forgetting that ice lay beneath his feet ; but Jehovah’s eye was upon him, and invisible spirits encompassed his path. Suddenly with a cry, he fell helpless on the ground.

A policeman crossed to his assistance, and asked quickly ‘ Are you hurt ? ’

‘ I fear so. Will you call a cab ? ’

‘ You have broken a rib, Pawkins,’ said the doctor. ‘ How came you to be out so late ? ’

'We are very busy at the shop, sir; so I stayed to finish the work.'

'Mr. Barnton will have to do without you now; for metime, I fear.'

'This accident will be my ruin,' groaned Cain.

'Nonsense, man,' replied Mr. Tozey, 'a good workman need never go a begging? I will pop in myself to-morrow and ask Barnton to push on for a while. Now, good night; mind and keep quiet.'

'A broken rib!' moaned Pawkins; 'how unfortunate, and "Castle Rushon" at stake. If our firm goes down before I secure the book whatever will become of me? Maudie,' he called, 'come here.'

'What do you want?' asked his wife.

'Send at once, and tell Squerrel I want him.' A curly head peeped in, and a childish voice lisped 'Daddy.'

The man's face flushed with pleasure; love for his boy was the only redeeming feature, in a nature black enough to have been quarried out of Satan's heart. 'Lift Willy up,' he gasped.

She did so, and the little rogue threw both arms around his father's neck, and whispered, 'have you brought some goodies?'

'No! but shut your eyes and see what I have got.'

Willy obeyed. And Pawkins, with much difficulty, took from under the pillow a china figure of a shepherd, and his dog.

The child snatched it with a cry of satisfaction. 'Be careful or you will break it,' said his mother, sharply.

'Leave him alone, Maud,' snarled the invalid, 'Hark, that is Squerrel's knock; go let him in.'

'Must he come right up, Cain?'

'Yes, I want to talk business with him, so you remain down stairs.'

'Whatever have you been doing to fall, man?' exclaimed

Squerrel, 'when so much depends on that book getting drawn off.'

'I know that. Mr. Hedgeway must be seen at once.'

'Solicitors won't get up in the night, like doctors and parsons. But what's the hurry?'

'Castle Rushon.'

'Oh, a paper must be drawn up. Have you ever seen Ward's signature?' he asked carelessly.

'Yes: can the firm hold out two months?'

'Impossible. When did you commence to print?'

'Last September.'

'Then it shall be dated for the 24th of that month.'

Cain remained a moment silent, then said anxiously, 'Will Barnton swear he bought the copyright, and made it over to me in payment for £100, borrowed twelve months previously?'

'Certainly.'

'You promise faithfully, Squerrel.'

'I'll take my oath, if you like.'

'Explain it to Hedgeway, and tell him I shall have Barnton's receipt to produce all right.'

'Must I ask him to slip in and see you?'

'I'll think it over.'

'Do, then let me know. Now, good-bye, I am dreadfully sleepy.'

'Good bye,' responded Pawkins, with a heavy sigh.

'What ails thee, lad?' said Maud. 'Hast thou sum'mut on thee moind?'

'Plenty.'

'Mun I fetch t'Minister?'

'Noa, thou daftling, I don't want anything with him.'

'For shame, and thee an office-bearer. Thou capst nee reet.'

'I'm in the valley of temptation, joy.'

'Why doesn't thou get out then?'

'Oh! Maudie.'

'Thou may well say, "Oh! Maudie." A nice un thou art, to be allus agate pre'ching at folks to flee frea t'evil rooad, and yet not able to pull thee awn shoone out o' t' muck.'

'This is a money matter.'

'How much?'

'Hundreds.'

'Hundreds!' screamed the woman, her eyes dilating with astonishment. 'Where can thou get soa mich brass, I'd loike to know?'

'Give me a drink, Maud, and I'll tell you.' She handed him a glass of milk; he took a hearty draught, then revealed without the slightest shame that the firm intended to rob Ward. His wife listened at first with evident horror; but as the plot unfolded itself, and he clearly proved that money might be made, her whole countenance changed; and she questioned eagerly, 'How can it be done, lad?'

'By claiming copyright.'

'If the claim weant stand, what then?'

Pawkins laughed diabolically, then exclaimed, 'I'll stock the markets with cribbed copies for the fool.'

'Giv ov'ver talking, Cain, thou seems exzosted.'

'A burdened mind is worse than broken bones: so listen, lass, and I'll tell thee all.'

The grey dawn crept in through the closed blinds, and found them still talking. The man's eyes were dull with pain, the woman's blazing with intense desire; for avarice had taken possession of her soul, and bound her to the golden calf.

'Will you help me, Maud?' asked Cain.

'Through fire and water,' she replied vehemently.

'A good wife is a crown unto her husband, and a jewel beyond price.'

'Now, lad, don't talk balderdash. We understand one

another, and that's enough; keep those soft words for men's needs, they sound best thear. T'Minister will be comin' e'now to see thee. Sal I put thee sarmon buke on to t'bed

'Yes! and a few children's hymns if you like.'

'And a fine buke or two, to mak thee leuke larned loike.'

'No,' he gasped, 'only religious ones.'

'Thou oft reads a novel, about heathen gods on Sunday, let me fetch "Plow-clark;" thou can clap it out a seet if t'parson coomes.'

'Well, bring me "Faust"; then go and get Willy h-breakfast.'

Just after eleven a cab stopped at the door, and two men got out. One was young, and rather good-looking, but a wolfish expression marred the lower part of his face.

'How is Pawkins?' enquired Squerrel, pleasantly.

'Very ill,' replied Maud.

'This gentleman is Mr. Hedgeway; do you think he will be able to see him?'

'Yes. Please come this way, but mind the steps are steep.'

'Good morning, Cain,' said the lawyer, 'I thought it best to hear about "Castle Rushon" from yourself.'

'I am glad to see you, sir. Has Squerrel told you that the book is mine?'

'There are so many points in law, that I should prefer to know the ins, and outs of the affair.'

Pawkins hesitated.

'You may speak freely, I shall act for the firm.'

Cain told his tale, then questioned anxiously, 'What have I to fear?'

'Nothing at present.'

'Should we go down before the work is complete, how then?'

'That would be awkward. Does the man who holds bill of sale know of this transaction?'

'No,' he stammered.

'Ward must be kept in the dark. The question now is, "Who will bell the cat?"'

'I'll do it,' cried Squerrel.

'Can you?'

'Trust me, I have gulled cleverer men than our author, before to-day.'

The rogues held a long consultation. But we will leave them for awhile, and glance at the Ward's cosey little parlour. Grace stood at an open piano, turning over some music; Nettie was busy with delicate lace work, and the sunlight fell softly over her, through the frosted window panes. Vases of flowers and a small bookcase were carefully arraigned; still the room did not convey an idea of perfect order, for Robert had just come in, and flung a pile of periodicals and various knick-nacks on to the table.

'I wish you would be a little more tidy, and not litter every chair with papers and things. Remember, we have no drawing room now.'

'You shall have before long, "Castle Rushon" is sure to have a run. Barnton said a few days since, it would make my name. What's the time, please?'

'Fifteen minutes past twelve.'

'I shall just catch my train; good morning, Miss Singleton.' The door slammed, then re-opened, and a glove-hunt ensued.

'You never put anything in its place,' sighed Grace.

'Here, this pair will do.'

'Thanks, now I am really off.'

'I had some good news this morning,' said Nettie, abruptly.

'From India?'

'Yes.'

Grace sat down, and Harry got well talked over. 'I declare here is Dont Lister coming,' cried Nettie, and without another word, she ran out to welcome the old man.

'What has brought you to Leeds?'
 'A bit ov business, and my May-flower.'
 'Have you seen uncle?'
 'Noa joy, I went up tul t'hoose, but sarvant man said
 he wor out, and ye wi' Miss Ward.'
 'So you thought you would come also.'
 'For sure, joy, what else cud I doa?'

CHAPTER XVIII.

DONT'S WILL.

GRACE wheeled a large easy chair nearer the fire, and asked if he would have some refreshment.

'Noa, Miss, I know'd yuh were a teetotaller; and not being a watter drinker my'sen, I put a bottle o' Bass's yale i' me pocket.'

'Shall I ring for a glass?'

'I'd rather hev a pint pot, if ye hev gotton sich an a thing i' t'hoose?'

'I believe we have.'

'Dun'not bother to mak a forenoon drinking, I's do varry weel till t'dinner be ready,' remarked Dont, with great complacency.

'Do you like my uncle's place?' enquired Nettie.

'Nay'a joy, it's too wasteful a hoile; theear's too monny sarvants, and ower mich breead flung i' t'swill-tub to suit my fancy.'

'How do you know that, Dont?'

'I took a walk rand to t'backside, on purpose to leuke.'

'Uncle complains frequently that his household expenses are heavy.'

'He sud get a Missis, I's fare capped at him going against scriptur.'

'Does he ?'

'For sure, doesn't t'parson tell ye oft enuff that "it is not id for man to be alone." If my Ruth dee'ad, I sud be at my t's end how to carry on ;' he paused, and appeared lost in thought for a few minutes, then turned to Miss Ward, and asked nestly, 'Dun'not ye reet a greeat deal, ma'am ?'

'A little, sometimes.'

'Wod ye, let me leuke at yer varry best ?'

Grace handed him a neatly written sheet of foolscap, and d pleasantly, 'My brother's is much better than mine.'

I dare say, bud it weant do for me : I need discretion, and ster Robert is nowt bud a flour heead, by what I hear.' nt drew out, as he spoke, a pair of ancient spectacles, set in 'er and tortoise shell ; then examined the paper carefully. 'I at ye to mak my will,' he said at last, with solemnity.

'I am not competent, Mr. Lister,' replied Grace.

'How's that ?'

'I am perfectly ignorant of law, you should go to a solicitor.'

'I hev been.'

'Then why come to me ?'

Dont rubbed his forehead, and appeared slightly perplexed. went to Cuthbert and Barnards, theear isn't a better firm i' eds, two's i' thousand, yuh moind, bud they cannot do for e.'

'How unfortunate.'

'Hi ! it's a greeat pity, wen clever men tak stupid girds, and ooh poohs at natteral affection. Lawyers are a hard lot, and ev no idea abawt t'spirit that sud exist a'tween a mon and his ife, it's allus the aforesaid soa and soa wi' them.'

'Come, come, Dont,' exclaimed Nettie, 'remember my papa one'.

'That's true, bud I none knowa how he treats thee mother.'

'Then you really wish me to write your will ?' questioned Grace.

'I hev coomed a purpose.'

'Will it stand?'

'Stand,' cried Dont, testily, 'we'll mak it.'

'I mean legally?'

'I hev takken care of that, Isaac stroked down what I want ye to reet; and this here document is Cuthbert and Barnard's makking up; read both, and judge for yersen.'

'What are your objections, Mr. Lister?'

'Cawdness. I bid them put my dear wife, Ruth, and the wodn't.'

'I perceive, they simply state that such and such things, are left to Ruth Lister.'

'Just so, I telled them as plain as cud be what to say, and offered t'brass down, bud noa, they sir'd, bow'd, and did thees awn way.'

'It might be the best.'

'Not it, indeed, they are a couple of heead-strong chaps, w law at their finger ends: ye'd hev been capped to hee'ar Maister Barnard ligging t'statutes down, it were better than a sarm on t'Anniversary Sunday.'

'Well, am I to write, and you dictate?' asked Grace, with a smile.

'Noa, ma'am, I can't stop to giv out, I mun be at t'clooath hall by three, ye mun study what's ritten theear, and copy grammatical.'

'Shall I return both papers?'

'Hi; fasten t'Cuthbert and Barnard to t'back, same as signing a name on a cheque; theear's law enuff i' it, I reckon, to leaven all t'lump; and joy, dun'not be flaid ov putting in a soft word or two; they'll happen comfort t'owd woman, wen I am gone.'

'I will do my best, and in a few days I will pop over with it.'

'Dont, will you go to Kendal?' said Nettie, 'you can fish in the Kent, and have some shooting too.'

'Nay'a love, it's ower far to travel i' t'clooath wagon, and I's none up o' steam.'

'You came to Ann's wedding.'

'If a mon sins once, is it ony reason he sud do soa again ? I felt awful, while t'greeat ingine wor teering through t'country, and flying reet i' t'face ov God Almighty.'

The girls laughed merrily, and just at the moment, a servant entered, and said, 'Please Miss Ward, dinner is served.'

When the meal was over, Dont went, and the ladies set off shopping. 'I shall want a dress for Mrs. Hardy's reception, must it be white, pink, or blue, Grace ?'

'White will be best.'

'Do you think so ? Agnes said it was not suitable for me.'

'Miss Chester is not infallible. Have you heard from her lately ?'

'No ; she mentioned going to Germany in her last note, so probably has no time for correspondence.'

'Or the inclination.'

'Very likely, letter-writing is a bore. Would you choose this silk, or that muslin ?'

'They are both exceedingly pretty.'

'Then I will buy them, it will spare trouble afterwards.'

Grace took out her watch 'You must be quick, love, it is just six,' she said.

'I had no idea it was so late. Will you go home with me ?'

'I cannot, dear, Robert wished me to overlook some Latin exercises.'

'How provoking ! leave them until to-morrow.'

'If I do, there will be those proofs to revise.'

'Can you correct for the press ?'

'I assist Robert.'

'Are printers very tiresome ?'

'Yes, when they use the spur.'

'What is that ?'

'A call for matter.'

'I do not understand.'

'You are a happy mortal, then.'

‘Do tell me what you mean?’

‘Well, suppose you are writing a book, and suddenly, inspiration feels disposed for a game at bo peep, you, however, toil away determinedly, but achieve nothing. Presently, the printer’s boy comes in, and says more copy is wanted. Sometimes this intimation acts like a powerful stimulus, but oftener turns an author’s den into purgatory.’

‘Do writers, and their publishers stand up well for one another?’

‘They must do so, or their work would fail.’

‘Why?’

‘The author supplies warp, and the printer weaves the web. But see, a cab is coming, I will engage it, then you can be home in a few minutes.’

‘Good bye, Grace, thanks for a charming day,’ said Nettie. She stopped the carriage at the lodge, and walked briskly up to the house.

Joe met her in the hall. ‘I am so glad to see you back,’ he whispered, ‘Mrs. Larkings has come.’

‘When did she arrive?’

‘About an hour since.’

‘Is anyone with her?’

‘Miss Chester and Russell.’

Nettie welcomed her visitors, with flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes. ‘I am delighted to see you, Mrs. Larkings,’ she exclaimed, then her arms were thrown round Russell’s neck, with a low cry of joy.

‘We came away all in a hurry, child,’ remarked Mrs. Larkings, graciously. ‘Miss Chester is returning from Scotland, she spent last evening at Holly Bank.’

‘I thought you were in Germany, Agnes?’

‘I changed my mind, and went with some friends on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Burns.’

Mrs. Larkings, placed her hands fondly on Russell’s shoulder, and said, ‘This precious boy, Nettie, has not been well, lately,

I heard Miss Chester promise your mamma to break her journey at Leeds, so at once determined to come also, and consult Dr. Hazlehurst regarding him.'

Nettie glanced slyly at her cousin, then asked, 'How is Mr. Larkings?'

'Deplorably low spirited, full of whims and fancies, it becomes quite distressing to live with him.'

'I am sorry he is so ill.'

'Theo is not ill, it is all on the nerves, but nevertheless, very trying to myself. I could not possibly exist, but for this darling boy.'

Nettie was astonished at the display of affection, for she had never previously, seen Mrs. Larkings condescend to acknowledge Russell's existence.

'It is only a little toothache, cousin, aunt thinks I have been reading too much.'

'It is a great deal more than that,' said Mrs. Larkings with decision, 'I am convinced you require constant care.' Joe entered at the moment, she turned to him hastily, and questioned, 'Will Doctor Hazlehurst be seeable to-night?'

'I think so, Esther, he dines at seven.'

'We may just catch him, then. Will you please send a messenger at once? or stay, you rush for him yourself, that's a good fellow.'

'Ned, shall go at once, but I don't really see the slightest occasion.'

'Thanks; mind and tell your man to say the case is urgent.'

Joe smiled, and glanced at Russell, who was lolling over a chair back, teasing the King Charlie spaniel. 'The lad looks well enough,' he ventured to remark.

'That proves you are ignorant of insidious disease. Come with me to the dining room, for a moment.'

'Well, Mrs. Larkings, what is it?' he said, offering her a chair.

'The boy's mother is dying; consumption, you know.'

'When did the news reach Burnside?'

'Yesterday; has Mary not sent word?'

'No.'

'She relied upon me, I presume, the family are quite startled. William set off for Spain immediately.'

'Poor fellow!' sighed Joe, 'he loved her passionately.'

'She ought to have been made a public example.'

'Who wrote?'

'A priest. He assured William that the creature, was penitent, and craving for pardon; but I don't believe what those sort of men say.'

'He will remain with her till the end, I suppose?'

'Yes; and I should not be astonished if he brings her body to England.'

'Of course he will.'

'It is a needless expense, where can she be interred? not in the Osborn vault I imagine?'

'William must decide that; but I think it likely, she will be placed with her own people.'

'Much better to leave the woman where she is. Russell shall never hear a word about her, if I can help it.'

'You are right, there, Esther; he is growing a fine lad.'

'Yes, since I took him under hand. Theo looks upon Russell now quite as a son, if Mary does not interfere, we shall get him to settle with us at Kent View.'

'How is Dora?'

'Oh, domineering it over everybody. I do think James Wilton is a simpleton.'

'Not he.'

'Their love-making, is perfectly ridiculous, and I tell them so.'

'Supposing it ever comes to a marriage, what then?'

'She would probably follow your example: and be first to drink from "the Well of St. Keyne."'

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHAT.

LATE that evening, Nettie sat by the dressing-room fire, with a letter in her hand; pleasant thoughts appeared to be fleeting through her mind, for a smile lit up the weary little face. A knock at the door startled her, and in answer to 'Come in,' Mrs. Larkings entered, and seated herself majestically in a large, velvet-lined chair.

'I want to have a chat,' she said; 'it is so nice my room opening into yours.'

'Has Patty made all comfortable, god-mamma? I told her to.'

'Yes, child; but I never felt so completely exhausted in my life. The people we travelled with from Lancaster were odious, it is perfectly abominable to admit such persons into a first class carriage, England is going to become a Red Republic, I fear.'

'God forbid,' exclaimed Nettie, who had just finished reading the life of Marie Antionette.

'Well, we are certainly verging upon critical times, and nothing but an iron hand, will keep our labourers down.'

'Iron melts in a furnace, and our Leeds hammer-men can mould it at will.'

'Just so, but they will find it harder work, to break the neck of our aristocracy.'

'No need to apprehend that; we are too loyal a nation.'

'When you are speaking of plebeians, never say we; please remember that the Norths, and Osborns are patricians.'

'And the Singletons.'

'I am not clear there. They are of course, gentry; still, it takes twelve generations before a woman can truly say, "My blood is entirely blue." In these degenerate days, the servant takes her mistress, and the butler his master. Therefore, Nettie,

be profoundly thankful, that our pure descent from a Saxon king, can never be washed out.'

'I am very proud of my ancestors.'

'You ought to be, and exceedingly grateful to myself, for engendering such laudable sentiments. As your sponsor, I feel desirous that you hold nothing but sound, and wholesome doctrines. If Christians would study the Bible properly, they would find, that rank, and orders were ordained from the foundation of the world.'

'Patricians are often poor,' remarked Nettie, softly. 'What must they do, then ?'

'Blue blood has its prerogatives, and a lady is a lady, whether she lives in garret, or hall. One instance will assert my theory. It has no parallel, and is beyond dispute. Mary, the chosen of God, and the mother of Christ, was of royal blood, yet she was poor, and a manger served as a cradle for her Divine child.'

'My mother's teaching in these matters, has always been the same as yours.'

'I am glad to hear it ; and I have unbosomed myself to-night because I can plainly foresee, as a nation, we are running after a phantom ; still, if the worst comes to the worst, die, child, but never lower your flag.'

'Uncle says, England at the present time is blessed, with able statesmen, peace, and prosperity.'

'False security, dear. Don't let Joe mislead you, he is a good-hearted fellow, but holds most erroneous views. Hark ! what is that noise, I have heard it several times, surely, not a mouse ?'

'It is only little Bun, wanting his bit of toasted cheese.'

'Who is Bun, pray ?'

Nettie drew back a curtain of crimson velvet, and displayed a large cage fitted up with every comfort, necessary for mouse-life.

'Well, I do declare !' cried Mrs. Larkings, 'wherever did you get that creature ? the smell is enough to breed a fever.'

'From Tommy McDonald. I promised him when dying, to take care of it.'

'What a preposterous idea, to carry the animal about with you !'

'He would fret himself to death, if I left him.' She touched the spring, and opened the gilded door.

'Good heavens ! don't let the thing out ! Where do you put him at nights ?'

'He runs about here, and sometimes pops slyly into my bedroom.'

'I declare ; if there is not a dog sleeping on a silk cushion, tufted with down !'

'Yes,' laughed Nettie, 'Uncle had it made on purpose for Minnie.'

'I really cannot allow such childish fancies, my dear. The dog is a beauty, certainly, but it must not remain here. Ring for Patty, and let her carry them both to the stables.'

'Oh, dear no, I cannot think of sending my pets away !' said Nettie, determinedly.

'But you must, I am a person that has a nose, and it might injure my health to have such a nuisance, near my sleeping apartment.'

'Bun shall not be touched, Mrs. Larkings, I am very sorry, but I cannot obey you in this, it would be sinful to do so.'

'Then remove the animals at once to your bed-room, and let this window be left two inches open, to clear away the offensive odour.'

'I will take them at once.'

'Come back again, please ; I have not finished my chat yet.'

When Nettie returned, she drew her rocking chair nearer to the fire, and heroically smothered a yawn.

'Pull down your hair, love, and get it brushed for the night.' How pretty she looks in that muslin dressing-gown !' thought Mrs. Larkings. 'Have you heard from Henderson lately?' she asked abruptly.

'Yes, this morning.'

'Is he still at Asseerghur ?'

'No, his regiment has been ordered forward to Rawal Pindi.'

'Travelling about in India, must be exceedingly fatiguing.'

'Harry says the worst part of their march was at Hussum Abdul. They were nearly swamped. Heavy rain completely soaked the men's clothes and baggage. This increased the camel's burdens so greatly, that many fell down dead on the road.'

'Is Rawal Pindi near to the hills ?'

'He speaks of the Himalaya mountains, and says they look magnificent, covered with eternal snow.'

'I suppose that is an exaggeration ?'

Nettie coloured, but kept silent.

Mrs. Larkings noticed two angry spots burning on her cheeks, she laughed and asked pleasantly, 'Is there any chance of this young hero coming back ?'

'I think not. But he has caught a magpie, and is training it for me.'

'A magpie ! what trash girls and boys write to one another. Does he mention weather ?'

'Snow is deep on the ground, and the native troops are suffering fearfully from cold.'

'Poor creatures, I do sympathise with them ; but Harry deserves censure, for leaving a good home, and splendid prospects for the express purpose of killing his fellow men.'

'Mrs. Larkings !'

'Frown as you like, child, still I regard him as nothing better than a butcher in the wholesale line.'

'He is defending his country,' replied Nettie, vehemently 'think if England was invaded.'

'Don't get excited ; foreign troops will never pass over Kent View lands.'

'Perhaps not, but fire and sword may enter many a British home.'

'There is nothing to apprehend in that way. What church does Joe go to?'

'St. Cuthbert's, Mr. Chaucer is our clergyman.'

'Are his views high, broad, or low?'

'I do not know.'

'I feared as much.'

'Uncle can tell you.'

'His opinions are not worth a halfpenny. Is your Vicar charitable?'

'Oh! yes, his poor people adore him. I wish you had been with me, one morning last week, and seen him nursing.'

'Do you suppose I should have become enraptured?'

'I fancy so.'

'I do not believe in clerical saintship.'

'Mr. Chaucer lays no claim to it. He never lets his right hand know what his left hand does.'

'Then how did you ascertain his good deeds?'

'Accidentally; and I learnt that day a lesson of love to my fellow creatures.'

'Pray proceed, I am quite curious to hear the circumstance.'

'In a cottage, close to St. Cuthbert's, an aged woman resides, who is a friend of Cressey Hardcastle's.'

'Who is Cressey Hardcastle?'

'Trip's grandmother. You must have heard her name of him.'

'I never permit gentlemen, to mention her name in my presence.'

'Trip is not disreputable; he is a good and steady man.'

'Well, go on love.'

'I spoke to Bessey Westerman, the landlady of the cottage out of church, and promised to pay a visit. My visit pleased the old woman, so I called again, and found our vicar there. Bessey had been there a while, and was all alone; Mr. Chaucer was not at home.'

lit a fire, boiled the kettle, and when I opened the door was on his knees making a slice of toast : he greeted me with a bright smile, and said frankly, "Will you please assist by making some tea?" I did so, then propped our invalid nicely up with pillows ; when all was comfortably arranged Mr. Chaucer left, and Bessey told me he frequently went to other cottages in sickness, and did the same.'

'Much better have applied for an order, and had her removed to the "house."'

'She does not wish to go.'

'The Vicar ought to enjoin it.'

'She is his child, for he has fed her at the Lord's table.'

'I cannot see what difference that makes.'

'Cannot you?'

'No dear.'

'Well, two persons may approach the sacred table as strangers ; they separate friends, for Christ has been present. Would you put Jesus into a workhouse?'

'Really, Nettie, you hold singular views : try to rid your mind of such crotchets, or they will clog all enjoyments and pleasures in life : but I feel sleepy, so good night.'

When they assembled at the breakfast-table next morning, there was no sign of Joe, but just as Nettie sat down before the urn, Ned entered with a letter

'Master left this note for you, Miss.'

'Has my cousin gone away?' cried Mrs. Larkings, aghast.

'Yes, ma'am, by the first train.'

'Be quick and read it, dear,' she said impatiently.

'Uncle simply says a telegram has summoned him to town, and begs you will both excuse his apparent rudeness.'

'How annoying,' exclaimed Agnes. 'I presume it is horse-racing, or something of that sort.'

'Oh ! no,' replied Nettie, with a gasp.

'Men are capable of any amount of wickedness,' responded her godmother, gloomily. Just at the moment a servant came in, and presented Dr. Hazlehurst's card.

CHAPTER XIX.

ONE WHO SERVES.

MRS. LARKINGS rose hurriedly and said 'Come with me at once Russell, you can finish breakfast afterwards.'

'Good morning, Mr. Hazlehurst. This is your patient. I think you have seen him before.'

The Doctor bowed courteously, and made a well-bred, common-place reply.

'I quite hoped to have had this pleasure last evening,' she remarked stiffly.

'I was late out, so did not receive your note until midnight.'

'Gentlemen should not keep late hours,' she replied.

'Medical men as a rule, madam, prefer their drawing-room fire to rough roads and pouring rain, but the call of duty must be attended to.'

'That is just the point. I wished to consult you myself last night.'

'Nothing seriously amiss, I trust.'

'Mr. Osborne's man was told to say the case was urgent. The fellow forgot, I presume; but in this house everything gets neglected.'

Mr. Hazlehurst smiled serenely; then drew Russell towards him, saying 'Well, sir, what is our trouble this time?'

'General weakness, with total loss of appetite,' interposed Mrs. Larkings.

'We shall soon put that right.'

'Are the lungs affected?'

'Rather weak. Tell Mrs. Singleton to please allow him to run wild for six months. Plenty of new milk will be better than medicine.'

'I will attend to your orders myself; the dear boy is at present staying at Kent View.'

'How is Mr. Larkings?'

'Quite well, but in wretched spirits. Consumption is ~~some~~ monomania with him: he actually imagines he has the com~~plaint~~ plaint, and keeps appealing to me for sympathy.'

'That is just my opinion.'

'You are mistaken, sir,' she indignantly exclaimed; '~~my~~ husband's disorder is entirely a nervous one.'

'His fears are not groundless, judging from what little ~~I~~ = I saw on my last visit to Holly Bank. Does he cough much ~~now~~?' ~~now~~

'A little, I fancy.'

Doctor Hazlehurst, pencil in hand, was lounging in a low easy chair. He suddenly lifted his long, silken eyelash~~es~~ es, and flashed a pair of bright violet eyes upon the lady: ~~they~~ they measured strength for one second. His look evidently meant, 'You heartless woman.' Her's, 'You audacious man.' Mrs. Larkings, however, retreated first, and realized, with a bitter pang, that she had a 'Master,' and not a 'Thee,' to deal with. 'You consider my husband in danger ~~then~~,' she said at last.

'He is in a very critical state, I assure you.'

'I really had no idea of this;' he has always been such a dear gentle lamb. Could you run down to Kendal any day next week, Doctor, and lay the true state of things before him; for I believe he has not made a Will, or set his house in order.'

Mr. Hazlehurst coolly drew on one glove, then said, languidly, 'Pardon me, but is this Mr. Larkings' wish?

'Pardon me!' she repeated, 'but my will at Kent View is absolute.'

The colour rushed over his forehead. He rose and replied haughtily, 'If Mr. Larkings desires to see me, I will come next Thursday. Will you kindly ask him to send a line by Monday's post?'

'Thank you ; he will, I am sure, be glad to avail himself of so great a privilege.'

'Is Miss Singleton in ?'

'Yes ; shall we adjourn to the breakfast room ?'

'I cannot stay now, but will probably call this evening, to have a cigar and game of chess with Joe.'

The Doctor went, and Mrs. Larkings retired to her own room ; affection and self-will were evidently having a sharp struggle. 'Poor fellow,' she kept murmuring, 'I fear I have been a little unkind.' Tears of mortification rolled over the hot face : then her future position in the eyes of the world forced itself upon her recollection. The storm instantly calmed, and she remembered Miss Chester had to leave at twelve-fifteen ; so giving one hasty glance at her hair, swept down the broad staircase. She found Agnes contemplating an exquisite painting of a Norwegian snow storm. 'How cold it is ; why have you let the fire so low ?'

'I did not notice ; must I ring ?'

'Please. Where is Nettie ?'

'In the library.'

'Call her at once ; we have just time to dress. Do you go through to Winchester, Miss Chester ?'

'Yes, and shall remain there three days.'

'With friends ?'

'A cousin of my mother's.'

'That alters the case ; but my opinion is, a young lady should never travel alone.'

Agnes opened her large blue eyes, and asked naively, 'What must we do, who possess neither father, brother, or husband ?'

'Stay at home, or engage a middle-aged companion.'

Miss Chester was forcibly proclaiming her belief in woman's rights when Nettie entered. 'The carriage has come round, and you are still gossiping,' she exclaimed.

'There is plenty of time, child. Will you go to the station ?'

'Certainly.'

'I want a few things from Marshall and Snelgrove's; may I order Benjamin to stop there?'

'Of course. Do you require anything, Agnes?'

'The Post-office, love; I want to register a letter.'

'We are going to have snow,' Mrs. Larkings said, as they entered the brougham.

'How jolly,' cried Russell. 'Can we call at Harper's, Nettie? I want a copy of "Robinson Crusoe."'

'We have not time; try to get one at the bookstall.'

'I won't have a cheap good-for-nothing thing,' responded the lad, with a pout.

'Never mind, dear,' said Agnes, good naturedly; 'I will send you a beauty from London.'

'You are awfully good, Miss Chester. Must I make you a specimen of Bumble-bees?'

'Please, is this the Post-office?'

'Yes. Will you drop this in for me?' asked Nettie slyly.

'With pleasure. For India I perceive?'

In another half-hour they were off, and Mrs. Larkings was benignly imagining Theo's expression of pleasure at her return. 'I shall find everything topsy-turvy, but as he is not long for this world, poor fellow, I will bear with it.'

When Nettie ran down stairs next morning, she found her uncle in the hall. 'No business to-day, Checksey,' he cried cheerfully, 'we will have breakfast, and a canter to Kirkstall.'

'How delightful; I have wanted a peep at the Abbey ever since I came.'

'We will leave our horses, and order lunch at the Hotel, then you can explore the tumble-down place, at your leisure.'

'What a darling you are, uncle. I don't think any one else is so good.'

'You are an idolater, pet.'

'I hope not.'

'Gilbert Singleton could scarcely prove you innocent in a court of law.'

'Would you bear witness?'

'Decidedly.'

'For, or against?'

'Against.'

'Then my chance of acquittal would indeed be small.'

Joe laughed, and took up a new number of the 'Edinburgh Review.' 'Make the coffee strong this morning, pet,' he said persuasively.

After breakfast they mounted and set off. It was a magnificent February morning; the ground hard, the atmosphere clear, and everything enlivened by gleams of sunlight.

'What a pity,' exclaimed Nettie, as they neared the ruin, 'that a scene so peaceful should be marred by the inroads of man.'

'Rather by man's progress,' he replied. 'Iron is king here.'

'It reigns supreme everywhere, I think,' she responded.

'The Servant of yesterday has become Master of to-day.'

Nettie gazed sadly at the ivy-clad Abbey; then, with a sigh, said 'We are living in a strange age.'

'Say, in a go-a-head one.'

'Do you think, uncle, we have wandered further from God than the people who reared this stately edifice?'

'You are insinuating that we of the nineteenth century are worse than our forefathers.'

'Just that.'

'I don't agree with you.'

'Compare the lives of those holy men with our own.'

'They did not comprise the whole world.'

'No, but their light flashed through it.'

'Like candles set on a hill. What could they do for the out-laying districts?'

'I cannot argue the point, but I feel convinced there was less wickedness.'

'Fewer hypocrites and rogues, I presume.'

'Yes.'

'Please remember how thinly England was populated in those days. We can afford now to keep a few extra scamps.'

'You are speaking thoughtlessly, uncle.'

'It is not the world, but the people in it, who have bent the knee in adoration to Mammon.'

'The Monks must have passed peaceful lives in this once beautiful valley. One can scarcely credit that sin ever dwelt within those walls.'

'Still, original sin has brought down its punishment, for death has set his indelible seal upon the place.'

'How hard to realize,' murmured the girl with a shiver of dread.

'It is gloomy here love,' said Joe, fondly, 'Let us ascend to the turret, the view from there is fine.'

'Where is Southey's elder tree: I want a souvenir?'

'Wait until we come down, then I will show you.'

When they reached the summit, they saw a gentleman standing on the narrow basement. He bowed courteously, and stepped back to give Nettie more room.

'A charming morning,' said Joe pleasantly. 'Are you going over the place, sir?'

'No! I came for a row down the river.'

'This is a fine old ruin. My niece has been questioning the possibility of its restoration.'

The stranger turned, and with a glance, keen as an eagle's, said, 'We hold a promise that neither man or time can take away.'

'Will you kindly repeat it?'

'That there shall be, "New heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

'Please, explain more fully,' said Nettie, timidly.

'I refer to the Hope of Ages. The second coming of our Lord.'

'Many divines seem to treat that doctrine as a mere illusion,' replied Joe.

'Does that make God's word less true?'

'Decidedly not: still this delay for centuries has made some professing Christians sceptical. They have ceased to watch, and presumptuously say, "He will never come in our time."'

'Never come!' exclaimed the stranger. 'Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has Christ, who shed his blood on Calvary, ceased to remember his people? Is the Angel's promise immediately after the Ascension to be accounted nought? Are those words of our blessed Saviour, "I will return," to be flung aside as empty?'

'Pardon me, sir, I spoke unadvisedly.'

'I have nothing to pardon. But would to God I could kindle in your heart one spark of that certain Hope.'

'It is mysterious that the Church should have lost sight of so comforting a belief,' remarked Joe. 'When do you expect the fulfilment of the promise?'

'Have you ever been becalmed at sea?' the gentleman questioned.

'Once.'

'Did you observe the first ripple on the ocean, then a swell of water, until wave followed wave like crested mountains, and the ship borne before the breeze sped gallantly on its way?'

'Yes.'

'Well, the Hope that had lain dormant was restored as a ripple, and gladdened a few weary hearts, now it has spread like a rush of waters throughout Christendom, and prayers from the faithful ascend as incense to God. But verily He Himself said, "Watch ye, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."'

'It will give me much pleasure to meet you again,' Joe remarked, handing his card.

'Thank you. I am sorry I cannot return your courtesy, as I have no card with me.'

'May I then ask your name without offence, sir?'

'*One who serves,*' was the smiling response.

Nettie looked perplexed, then said gravely, 'That is the motto on every angel's crown.'

CHAPTER XX.

A YOUNG COLT.

ONE Monday morning Barnton and Co. collapsed, causing a great deal of dismay in religious circles.

'A sad pity about Barnton,' said a good-looking business man to his minister. 'I am afraid it will bring a slur on our Society.'

'I don't think so,' replied Mr. Leigh; 'these are hard times you know, a man can but do his best.'

'Exactly; still that dissolution of partnership between him and Squerrel looks bad.'

'Are you a creditor?'

'No; but Mason is in for a thousand; and I suppose Cain Pawkins has lost his savings.'

'Poor man. How did he get involved?'

'Lost one hundred pounds, the fruit of twelve years' self-denial.'

'Is it possible?'

'I am sorry for his wife and children: for of course his situation is gone also.'

'He will have the sympathy of many friends, I feel certain, Mr. Rigg.'

'Sympathy won't meet the case, we must give solid proof of it.'

'What do you advise?'

'That we go together this evening to see brother Pawkins. You exhort him to be patient, and I will extend a helping hand.'

'He has been a zealous worker in the vineyard for years.'

'Good man, altogether,' replied Mr. Rigg, warmly; 'trustworthy, and all that sort of thing. We office-bearers must stand shoulder to shoulder, and not leave a brother in the lurch.'

While these truly Christian men were conversing in Main-gate, Messrs. Hedgeway, Barnton, and Co. were closeted in one of the upper printing rooms. Sandy looked pale, and haggard. 'There is going to be an awful row,' he said, dejectedly.

'Sure to be: a bill of sale is never appreciated by creditors,' Mr. Hedgeway remarked placidly; 'then there is "Castle Rushon," I don't feel quite safe about it being removed from the premises.'

'It was sent to the binder's a month since,' Cain exclaimed, angrily.

'You have the sheets I presume, Squerrel.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Were they removed while you were one of the firm.'

'No, the night after our dissolution was signed. Rather a close shave.'

'Who delivered them?'

'Barnton.'

'In his own name?'

'No.'

'Whose?'

'Pawkins.'

'Does Mr. Ward know of the crash?'

'I have not seen him,' replied Barnton.

'Then some one must go at once to Leeds. I think Cain would do best; he has a cool head, and wonderful power for calculation.'

'What must I say?' questioned Pawkins.

'Anything to keep the fool quiet over the creditors' meeting.'

'Confound my rib, but for that I should have had the book safe at home,' growled Cain.

'Possession is nine points in law,' laughed Sandy.

'You are mistaken,' responded Mr. Hedgeway. 'I tell you plainly, if Ward won't stand plucking your claim to "Castle Rushon," excepting printing expenses, is not worth a halfpenny.'

'Legal walls are sometimes shakey. You work the book through, and I'll pay handsomely,' said Pawkins.

'We are both pillars of one Church,' so of course I will do my best.'

'My character and good name must not suffer, keep that in mind.'

'The patient submission of Brother Pawkins shall be mentioned at every church meeting.'

'Quite a Saint in trouble,' sneered Squerrel.

'Ruined by this poor d—l,' exclaimed Barnton, 'I shall expect good per centage for bearing all delinquencies.'

'Your burden will not be light,' replied Hedgeway, gravely. 'Come Cain, look quick, the Leeds train leaves in twenty minutes.'

'Good morning, gentlemen, you entrust this matter entirely to me then?'

'Certainly; don't be afraid you can easily gull Ward.'

'Pawkins could deceive old Lucifer,' said Squerrel. 'You and I, Sandy, are only half-blades where he comes.'

'Tell our author we wish his book every success,' cried Hare.

'And a rapid sale in London if it ever gets there,' exclaimed Mr. Hedgeway, satirically.

Cain travelled express, so accomplished his journey in fifteen minutes; he walked direct to the refreshment rooms for his mid-day meal.

'I fear Mr. Hedgeway's fee will be heavy,' he muttered; 'and if Ward turns out sharp what then? I must pump judiciously and ascertain, if possible, from which quarter the wind is likely to blow.' The young person in attendance passed the table at the moment, and asked pleasantly, 'Anything else, sir.'

'No, Miss, the carnal man is satisfied. I trust you are a teetotaller, like myself.'

'I have been an abstainer from childhood,' she replied.

'Good, very good,' said the hypocrite. 'Do you read your Bible daily?'

'Every morning, and the Catechism on a Sunday.'

'What do you learn from that?'

'To keep my hands from picking and stealing,' was the innocent response.

'This random shot struck the bull's eye. Cain winced and cast a glance of hatred at the smiling girl; then, without a word left the place, and walked direct to Ellesmere-street. Let me see, Ward lives at No. 22, but I will go first to yon shop and make a few inquiries; a great deal of information may often be gathered, for servants will talk. Pawkins was right; the proprietress was a well-seasoned scandal-monger, and soon many tit-bits of gossip regarding Robert and his sister were readily related. We have had a pleasant, and I hope, profitable conversation. Words in season edify the Christian wayfarer.'

'They are very comforting,' replied the woman. 'I am always glad to tell anything that may lead to the conversion of benighted souls. Are you a town's missionary?'

'Not exactly, for I labour without money and without price'

'You evince great interest in this novel writer.'

'I do.'

'You want to pull him from the broad road, I suppose?'

'Ma'am,' he rejoined, solemnly, 'how can I wish otherwise. Mr. Ward is standing on the brink of a deep pit; I see the flames, and smell the brimstone ascending from it. Shall we let a fellow creature leap in?'

'Oh! no, hold him back by all means.'

'That is just what I yearn to do.'

'Pluck him, brother, as a brand from the burning.'

'Just so, he is making sad use of his talents.'

'I told their servant so this morning; writing lies is almost as bad as telling them.'

'Ten times worse, for the mischief spreads further.'

'That's true enough; but he looks a quiet gentleman.'

'Still waters run deep: there's plenty in him.'

'Madge says, Mr. Robert has got a fearful temper.'

Pawkins looked rather uneasy, and asked quickly, 'Did she tell you anything more?'

'The lass declared he was like a young colt, for having his own way.'

'A young colt,' Cain repeated slowly.

'She meant he was awfully strong willed, sir.'

'A graceless youth,' sighed Cain.

'Young men are most impetuous and foolish,' she replied sharply. 'A nephew of my own went mad because he was crossed in love.'

'A sad dispensation.'

'It nearly killed me: sit down and I will tell you all about it.'

'Your story would be very affecting; but my mind is burdened to-day, so I will call another time.'

'Do, I hope you may succeed in converting Mr. Ward; but he is hard to deal with.'

'Firmness will be needed; for it is easier to make a lion yield up his prey than an author his idols.'

'Idols ought to be broken,' cried the woman, 'I've no patience with such tomfoolery. Don't pick your words; let them come hot from the oven.'

'I will do my best, but the flesh is weak.'

'Think of his poor soul, and do not be daunted.'

Pawkins professed to wipe some tears away—'I am going like David,' he said, 'to fight the Philistines. Will you be a mother in Israel, and pray for me?'

Mrs. Norman crimsoned. 'I am only forty-three,' she simpered, 'please say sister instead.'

Cain soon appeased, and bid the blooming widow good-bye; then crossed to Ward's, and rung the bell loudly; for his views had expanded immensely. In imagination, he already possessed all rights on 'Castle Rushon,' and considered it almost unnecessary to inform Robert that Barnton had failed. 'Is your master in?' he said to the servant.

'Yes, my man.'

'Tell him Cain Pawkins wishes to see him.'

Madge returned quickly, and said 'Come this way, Mr. Ward will speak to you at once?'

'Good morning, Pawkins, what news from Lexton?'

'I am sorry to say Mr Barnton is rather unfortunately circumstanced at present.'

'In what way?'

'The firm has liquidated.'

'Liquidated!' gasped Ward. 'How about 'Castle Rushon?'

'It is quite safe, but Mr Barnton thought you would feel anxious, so he wished me to call, and explain things.'

'How good to think of me, amidst his trouble.'

'We are overwhelmed,' replied Cain with a sigh.

'The crash is sudden.'

'Rather.'

'Hard times? I presume.'

'Partly, but want of capital to work on was the principal cause.'

'Mr. Barnton appeared energetic.'

'He laboured night and day to make ends meet.'

'Squerrel's separation will have hastened the smash.'

'It was a tremendous blow.'

'I am truly grieved for your master. Are the creditors inclined to be merciful?'

'We all hope so, but the trouble is widely spread. I for one have lost twelve years' savings.'

'You?'

'Yes; I lent him one hundred pounds, gained by the sweat of my brow, and daily self-denial.'

'I do sympathise with you.'

Pawkins smiled, and replied humbly, 'Thank you kindly, sir.'

'Is there any probability of Barnton going on again?'

'There is no cause at present to apprehend otherwise, master, however, advises you to make Glen & Co. sole publishers now that our firm has collapsed.'

'I understood you to say that they might go on again.'

'They might; still there are always contingencies, this bill of sale, for instance.'

'Bill of sale! Will that affect my book?'

'No, it only claims all on the place; your work was sent to the binders some time ago.'

'But the eight last pages are still to print.'

'I shall ask permission to finish; the types are all set. The only difficulty is a delay in publication.'

'Why?'

The creditors must meet before anything further can be done.'

'When will they do so?'

'In a fortnight.'

'I am quite ignorant in these matters; can you tell me how to proceed?'

'Just keep quiet,' said Cain decidedly.

'Would it not be advisable to consult a solicitor?'

'Not the slightest requirement. Mr. Hedgeway was enquiring about your book only this morning, sir.'

'Who is Mr. Hedgeway?'

'The acting solicitor. Everything has to be done as he orders; you will receive an official intimation from him in due course.'

'Do you suppose there will be any dispute regarding terms? I hold no written agreement.'

'The terms made with the firm must be kept.'

'I hope Barnton's bankruptcy won't injure the book.'

'A few weeks' delay is all you have to fear.'

'That is right. Will you express my warmest sympathy to your master, and tell him I wish he was safely through his bother.'

Pawkins opened the door, then turned round abruptly, and said 'I shall be in the creditors' meeting.'

'Well?' questioned Robert.

'May I run over when it closes, sir, and tell you how things have gone for poor Mr. Barnton?'

'Do,' exclaimed Ward, gratefully, 'I shall feel extremely anxious.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TESTIMONY.

ONE fine February afternoon, Trip stood beside a small kitchen bookshelf, apparently lost in thought; at length he took down a well thumbed volume. 'I sudn't wonder if t' words are here,' he muttered, 'for my grandfather was a far learned mon, and well acquainted wi' t'sayings ov t'early preachers;' he walked quickly to a long-settle which was placed in front of the

house, and began to turn the leaves over, anxiously. 'I've fund them,' he cried joyfully, 'they are real grand, worth printing i' gold !' and with evident delight he commenced to spell out those words of St. Augustine, 'The spiritual house of the soul is built up in time, and solemnly dedicated in eternity.' 'Mine he takken a long toime i' building, Lord, I wonder when Thou wilt let it be dedicated? bud happen if Thou took me, Sally an t'little oons wod want t'wage on Saturday neets; it wod be hard for them to pine, and me to rest i' paradise. Satan tempts me fearful wi' these doubts, for t'owd enemy knows where I'm cranky.' 'Oh! God,' he exclaimed passionately, 'help me, increase my faith, and dunnut let it fail. His prayer was closed abruptly by a man asking 'Does Trip Hardcastle live here?'

'Yes, maister.'

'I've brought news of a distant friend.'

'Charlie Hodge?' enquired Trip eagerly.

'Yes.'

'When did you see him, stranger?'

'In New Zealand, six months ago.'

'Where is he now?'

'Dear old comrade, don't ye know me?' he exclaimed.

'Why, Charlie, it can't be thee?'

'But it is.'

Trip bowed his head, and a shower of tears washed his cheeks. 'Oh! Father,' he moaned, 'I've been agate doubting Thee, even when Thou was answering my prayer.'

'Are you glad to see me back?' questioned Hodge.

'Glad? I am that.'

'Why dost thou cry then, like a bairn?'

'For joy, lad. I hev wrestled for thee i' prayer, but no answer came, t'ground seemed dry, I got noa leet, noa assurance that thou wur saved.'

'Christ is all, and in all to me now, Trip.'

'Glory be to God; wi' Simeon of old, I can say, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."'

'Soa thou has thought abawt me all these years?' said Hodge, huskily.

'Thou's rarely been off my moind.'

'I never wrote; did ye think me ungrateful?'

'Noa, bud I was sometoimes flaid that t'devil hed gotten thee intul his clutches again. Why didn't thou stop i' 'Merica?'

'I fled from temptation, to California.'

'What ticed thee, lad?'

'Drink and old chums. At San Francisco, I came across Jack-o'-peak and Racketty Bill.'

'Poor Jack,' murmured Trip, sorrowfully, 'we hev oft sinned together. Wur he mich altered?'

'No.'

'Did he say owt particular to thee?'

'A great deal, not worth repeating. I'd found some bits of gold, so packed up at once, and left the place.'

'Into t'wilderness?'

'Hi, right away across mountains and seas, to the burning tropics.'

'Did yuh ever leet on a real black heathen?'

'Both black and red.'

'I'm fare capped. Did thou say a word for Christ?'

'No, the mark of Cain was on my brow, and I rambled about like the Wandering Jew.'

'Don't tak gorm ov sich stories, Charlie; they may flay guilty souls, bud they weant draw to Christ. Where did t'Lord fend thee?'

'A board ship.'

'On t'moighty ocean?'

'Yes.'

'How long sin?'

'About five years.'

'Thou's happy now.'

'I'm at peace.'

'What hez brought thee to England?'

'Yuh.'

'Me?'

'Yes, I want to pay my debt.'

'What debt?'

'Gratitude.'

'If that's all, tak the'sen back; thou owes me nowt.'

'Oh! Trip, how can you speak so; think of that night when I was mad with terror in Chadwick-court. Who took me to owd Granny's?'

'Dunnut talk i' that fashion lad; t' joy of this hour repays all that. Come intul t' hoose, and let us thank God for all His mercies.'

When prayer was over, Hodge said 'I'm going back to Leeds this evening, is Granny still living?'

'Hi! and keeps t' shop i' Greenwood Fold; t'owd woman will be fain to see yuh.'

'To-morrow must be Thanksgiving-day, so I shall bring her here in a cab. "I am a rich man now, Trip."

'Dunnut speak ov t' golden calf,' he replied curtly; lest it spoils our gladness.

'You promised; when I took that pound, I should be your banker.'

'Thou shalt too, if needs be.'

A stiff argument ensued. Trip spring up at last and exclaimed almost testily, 'This din about brass mars my joy. Giv Sally t' sovereign if thou loikes for t' bairns, but doal giv over'd preaching pounds, shillings, and pence to me.'

'Well, well, good bye old fellow; I'll bring Granny to-morrow.'

'Night passed, morning dawned, still Trip sat motionless in his hugh elbow chair. Sally awoke, and ran down quickly. "What ivver ails thee?" she cried.

'Dunnut, dunnut tew me, lass. I've seen my crown! it's breet, gloriously breet,' he murmured.

'And thou deserves it,' she answered, in the fulness of her love.

'Noa, noa,' he exclaimed vehemently; it's Christ's gift. Oh! Sally, if thou'cud hev leuked at t' greeat jewels blazing i' that *diadem* thou wouldn't sleep again to-neet.'

'Don't give way to dreams, Trip.'

'Dream, it's noa dream. I see a crown and an angel holding it, bud between us thear's vast darkness; happen it is "t' valley of t' shadow of death."'

A cold chill crept over the woman. She put her hand softly on to his shoulder, and gasped 'Art'a ill, my lad?'

'Noa, joy; I'm happy, and scarce know what's up wi' me.'

'Mill-bell will ring at hofe past five, and thou's ne'er hed a wink ov sleep.'

'Sleep! Who could sleep wi' angels, and crowns afore thear ees? Go thee to bed, and leave me to plead wi' God alone.'

'Trip is i' one of his queer ways,' she thought. 'I'd best leave him to his'sen. He's a grand mon i' t'pulpit, bud i' matters ov trade, and ligging out brass, he's a fool. Charlie's pund will come in rare and useful, for Mag wants a new hat and Rob a pair of shoes; little Lizzie's frock is fair unmenesful. I'll set off to Bradford reet early and buy them cheap; Granny weant come while afternoon. I wonder what we mun hev for tea; t' owd woman is partial to sousage, so I'll bring a pund. Ruth Lister will lend me her silver spoons; then t' cups and saucers Granny gave me on my wedding day will leuk reet nice. When Trip goes to his wark I'll fettle up; thear's nowt better nor an hour i' t' morning. Sally was no laggard, so her husband, when he came in for breakfast, found everything beautifully clean.'

'What's up?' he asked, as his eye fell on her Sunday shawl.

'I'm bawn to Bradford to buy a two or three things for t' bairns.'

'All reet lass, weant it tew thee ?'

'Noa, I sal manage rarely.'

'Will yuh hev enough to get a gown for yuhr sen ?'

'I mun do bawt, lad.'

'See, here's ten shillings more. I worked a bit overtoime ~~==~~
last month.'

'Thou wants a cooat.'

'Nivver heed that; mun I coom a bit down t'rooad to mee ~~==~~
thee ?'

'Doa, I sal be loaden.'

Trip finished his meal, then commenced to romp with the
youngest child. 'Coom lad,' said Sally, rather impatiently,
't'mill bell rang five minutes sin.'

'I'm bawn God bless thee lass.' It was the last time his
footstep sounded on that sanded floor.

A little after ten, Mr. Doncaster entered the factory yard.
'Hardcastle,' he said, 'those bales of wool must be hoisted
to the warehouse.'

'Very well, sir.'

'Attend to them at once, please.'

'All reet, Master, I'll fetch Amos.'

One by one they run the heavy bales up. Trip stood
watching the ascent of the last. Suddenly there was a crash,
then a shout of 'Hardcastle is killed.' The chain had broken.

Half a dozen men rushed out. 'Where is he ?' they called.

'Under that bale.'

It was soon pulled aside. 'Is he dead ?' inquired Mr.
Doncaster.

'We are flaid soa,' was the sorrowful response.

'Give him more air, and one of you run for a doctor. He
may yet be alive.'

'We dar'nut touch him, sir, he's most crushed i' pieces.'

'Poor fellow,' murmured the gentleman.

'Here's t'Doctor. Stand aside,' shouted a tall, gaunt man.

'That's nubbut a stranger.' 'Where did thou leet on him,
Sam ?' asked another angrily.

'Butterfield wer out, bud I seed this chap's carriage standing at t' Rectory, soa axed him to coom.'

'Happen he knows nowt.'

'Hod thee din ; he's a great mon frea Leeds.'

Doctor Hazlehurst bent down, and felt Trip's pulse. 'There is life, and that is all,' he said, softly.

'Can he be taken home?' questioned Mr. Doncaster

'Impossible ! all will be over in a few minutes,' then he tenderly lifted the head of the dying man, and whispered 'Do you know me ? Is there anything I can do, Hardcastle ?'

A quivering of the eyelids was the only response.

'He is conscious,' remarked Mr. Hazlehurst.

'We can't find Sally. Try to leave her one word,' pleaded Doncaster.

'Love is the life of man.' Directly his wife was named Trip opened his eyes, and slowly murmured, 'Tell her to trust in God.'

Profound silence ensued, then some one exclaimed 'Alleluia Tommy is coming, mak way.'

'Be quick, Tommy, speak a word ov comfort tul him,' said a young lad anxiously.

Alleluia stood perfectly motionless. Words at length came, like the out-pouring of a volcano. 'Trip ! Trip, my mon, he cried, 'dunnut dee wi'out leaving a testimony.'

Hardcastle smiled, raised one arm, and said 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.' The voice ceased, a ray of more than earthly brightness illuminated his face. 'Heaven ! my Crown,' he gasped, as the light faded from his eyes.

They covered him reverently. 'One of yuh goa first and tell his wife,' said Sam, 'bud stop, t'strange Doctor will happen break it tul her his'sen.'

'Jenny Wick, says Sally went to Bradford reet early this morning,' replied Amos.

'Poor creature, a sad trouble awaits her,' said Mr. Hazlehurst, compassionately.

'Hi ! and sho's just at down-ligging,' exclaimed a rough, ragged woman.

A cry of pity, and the plea 'God help her,' went up to heaven.

'Will you kindly undertake this sad mission, Doctor?' pleaded Mr. Doncaster.

'I will. Has she returned yet?'

'Noa, sir, bud yu'll leet on her i' t'Bradford rooad,' interposed Sam.

'Shall I accompany you?' asked Doncaster.

'No, she would recognize you and that might startle her at once.'

'We are ready to take Trip hoome, Maister,' said Amos.

'Wait a few minutes my man, I wish to make sure that his wife is not anywhere about,' remarked the Doctor.

'Ye'd better drive on, sir, we sal be a bit i' hugging him,' replied Sam, sorrowfully.

'Very well.' Then turning to Doncaster, he said, 'Will you please go with them, and see that all is arranged quietly?'

'Certainly. Can I do anything else?'

'It would be advisable to have Ruth Lister, or her daughter in readiness. They will know best how to soothe her.'

The men stood silent until the Doctor drove off, then Sam put his hand on Tommy's shoulder, and said persuasively, 'Thee come and speak a word or two ov Scripture to Sally; summut reet comforting thou knows. T'strange mon will happen flay her; sho's nobbut a weakly body.'

'It's a hard task ye set me, lad.'

'Hi ! bud thou mun draw dawn strength.'

'Trip was reet hand i' t' vineyard,' replied Alleluia, huskily. 'How can I do bawt him? I feel like a withered plaint, t'loife hez gone out ov me.'

'Whist Tommy,' exclaimed Robinson, who had just joined the group, 'thou moant talk soa or t'ungodly will rejoice.'

'Oh! Isaac. I's alone now and desolate,' he sobbed.

'Trip sleeps, bud Christ lives! Remember he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

'Glory be to God. I'll lift t' cross i' His name, and ye mun pray that my strength fail not.'

'Amen,' was the vehement response. 'Now lift the body carefully, and let ivvery mon tak a part,' said Robinson.

They had just left the cottage when the Doctor drove up. 'He's browt Sally hooome i' his carriage, sho ow't to be well satisfied,' cried the ragged woman who had followed the men, evidently determined to see everything.

'For shame, Poll,' whispered Sam, 'yuh wodn't loike to be i' her place.'

'Bud I wod, for my maister is a real nowt. I wish he wer dead.'

'Hod thi din, or tak thee'sen off,' he replied sharply.

'Sally leuks loike a ghost, Isaac,' remarked Amos, as they walked back to the mill, 'bud sho's i' gud hands I reckon. Barber Ike says he's one of t'faculty frea Leeds.'

'Bless thee, lad; doesn't t'knew that's Hazlehurst his sen?'

'Thou ne'er says it.'

'Bud I doa.'

'He seems reet soft hearted, and noan stucken up.'

'Soft hearted,' echoed Robinson. 'Thou sud hear my Ann talk; sho wur saying, nobbut last neet, if Doctor Hazlehurst saw a woman i' trouble, he wor off loike t' crack ov a gun tul her.'

'That's a rare character, bud his fore-elders wer all salibrated men.'

'They doctor wi' science thou knows, Amos, and mak wonderful cures; this here John beats all t'dollop.'

'I hope he hez gotten leet.'

'Thou means is he a Methodee.'

'U: 1'

'I can't say for certain, bud I think he goes to Church.'

'His heart's reet; I wish he cud be browt under t'Influence.'

'Under t'Influence! If Hazlehurst isn't under it, I'd loike to know whoa is. Doings ov his daily loife, Amos, wod mak grand pictures i' a Family Bible. Hark, that's twelve stricking; come in and hev a bit ov dinner afore thou goes back to wark.'

'Thank thee, Isaac, bud my heart's i' me throat: I san't bite on to-day.'

'Whya, come for'ards, and lens talk things ovverd; summut mun be done for Sally and t' bairns.'

'Leuk's ta' where's yon cab going, I'll wait and see.'

'That's Cressey Hardcastle, and t' furren mon who w~~as~~ axing fur Trip yesterday,' exclaimed Isaac; surely t'owd w~~as~~ man can't hev gotten news a'ready.'

'Betty Murgy, told mother that Sally was expecting com~~pan~~pany this afternoon;' Ann, called from the scullery.

Granny smiled, and moved to Robinson as they pass~~ed~~d. 'I used to nurse yon mon wen he was a bairn,' she said to Hodge.

'You would be young then, I suppose?' he replied jocular~~ly~~ly.

'It's twenty-six years come Idle Feast, sin I left Puds~~ey~~ey. Isaac were larning t'wool business then, wi' Holmes; he's been a steady lad, and saved a lot ov brass.'

'You look pale, are you tired, granny?'

'Noa, thou knows I'm riding i' a coach;' her face lik~~e~~e a May morning, was bright with smiles. The cab stop~~ped~~ped abruptly. 'What a crowd raand our Trip's door,' she gas~~ped~~ped, 'surely nowt hez happened.'

Charlie shuddered; the remembrance of Chadwick Court flashed to his mind; he got out quickly, and spoke to a bystander. When he returned, his grief-stricken countenance told the tale.'

'My lad's killed,' she moaned.

Hodge made no response.

Granny bowed her head, and the blue veins on her temples swelled like cords, at length she said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

'Will you go in with me now?' Charlie asked, softly.

'Hi! bud let me hev a word wi God, fust. He's sent t'blow, an I mun ax him how to beear it. Oh, dear, how my heart warks!' she sobbed, as Hodge led her gently in.

'You are all on a tremble,' he responded, sadly.

'Wear hev ye putten him?' she asked a woman who was busy taking small articles out of a basket.

'On his awn bed, i' t'big chamber,' was the reply.

Little Rob came running to her. 'Daddy wean't speak,' he cried, hiding his bonnie face in her dress.

'Granny's tired. Go play, joy,' said Charlie.

'I dun'nut see thi mother, wear is sho?' questioned Cressey, in a startled voice.

'Sally's reet bad,' interposed the woman; 'two doctors, and Ruth Lister are with her. I'd a' gone up mysen, bud a strange non teld me to stop dawn. He's a rare gaffer.'

A footstep sounded on the stairs, then Ruth appeared. 'I hought it was yuh, Granny,' she said. 'Doctor Hazlehurst hez ent me dawn to say that ye cannut see Sally yet, sho's i' a sad vav, poor thing.'

'Is onybody thear beside thee?'

'Yes; t'minister's wife.'

'Well, I'll go leuk at Trip, it will happen doa me gud. Did yuh say Doctor Hazlehurst wur up i' t'little chamber?'

'Hi.'

'That mon is raised up of God, and he allus claps him i' t'reet place. I wud loike to be wi Sally, if he wodn't be offended.'

'Wait a bit, t'seet of yuh moight mak her war,' pleaded Ruth.

'Verry we'al, lass, I sal doa no harm here,' she murmured,

gently opening the door of Trip's room. Then sinking into a chair, moaned, 'I cannot stand, and thou cannot hod me up now, lad! my ees weant close leuking at thee, bud thou'll be on t'landing-place to welcome owd Granny to Paradise. Oh, God, help me !' and after that piteous cry, she uttered no word, or sound, but sat motionless as a figure of stone. The evening shadows gathered, soon an infant's cry announced to those waiting that poor Trip's wife was a mother. In a few minutes Mr. Hazlehurst entered Hardcastle's room, and placing one hand kindly on Cressey's shoulder, said softly, 'Your granddaughter is spared.'

'May I goa in now, sir?' she questioned.

'Not for a little time.'

'Why'a not?'

'The sight of you might upset her again.'

'I dunnut think it wod,' she replied, with a sob. 'Is it a lad or a lass, Doctor?'

'A boy.'

'Glory be to God! he sal be called after his faather.'

The Doctor looked down compassionately, and a smile of sympathy lit up his face. 'Come with me.' And taking her arm, he led her tenderly to the kitchen fire.

Hodge was standing alone on the hearth. Mr. Hazlehurst turned to him, and said, 'Are you a relative or a friend?'

'Trip and I were mates years ago,' he replied.

'Then I suppose you will undertake all arrangements for the funeral. Was Hardcastle in a club?'

'Pardon me, sir, but it is my duty to defray all expenses, and provide for his family afterwards.'

'Yours?' responded the Doctor with evident surprise.

'You don't remember me, sir.'

'No, my man. Have we met before?'

'Yes.'

'Where?'

'In Chadwick Court.'

Mr. Hazlehurst started. 'Surely you are not Charles Hodge?' he questioned sharply.

'I am, sir.'

'What a wonderful change! I had not the slightest idea who you were.'

'Christ's blood can wash a murderer clean,' he rejoined, with fervency. 'You know how much I owe to Hardcastle.'

'Ah, poor fellow! he stood by you faithfully. Have you been fortunate while abroad?'

'Very.'

'I am glad to hear it.'

'I came, hoping that Trip would return with me to New Zealand?'

'Hi! bud t'Lord hez takken him to a better spot nor that,' interposed Granny.

'I am worth about five thousand, doctor, in hard cash, beside land and sheep: so I intend to settle twenty shillings a week on Sally, and the children.'

'You will act rightly, Hodge.'

'Ye moan't forget abawt t'burying,' said Granny. 'Sally will be better enow, and then we will talk it over'd.'

'It must not be mentioned to her, please, mind that,' remarked Mr. Hazlehurst, authoritatively.

'Verry weal,' she answered, testily, 'bud I think mysen it's natteral, to ax a wife which verse sho'll hev on her husband's funeral card.'

'Just so, but this poor creature must at present be kept perfectly quiet.'

'I'll make Granny a cup of tea,' said Hodge, pleasantly.

'Yes, do. Now, good night, I will be in again to-morrow.'

'That mon,' exclaimed Cressey, 'allus maks me think of hem thear words, "Blessed are t'upreet." Hazlehurst wod be perfect if he'd nobbut give ower gaffering.'

'We all hev faults,' Charlie replied, gravely.

'Bud t'doctor's sin is one ov t'original's, and hez descended

frae father to son, ivverybody i' Leeds knows on t'Hazlehurst temper.'

'And of the Hazlehurst talent,' replied Hodge, quickly.

'Hi! that's a heritage i' t'family also.'

'Are none of us responsible for pride, temper, and self-will
Granny?'

'Ax a minister that question, lad.' 'Still thou knows
all tak aar mother's faults at toime we steal her eyes, a
hair.'

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET.

HODGE, and Alleluia Tommy had a long conversation about Trip's funeral, for Sally had willingly consented to leave everything in their hands.

The sad day dawned, snow covered the ground, and a biting north-easter whistled through the church-yard trees. 'If this keeps on, Saxton,' Poll said, gloomily, 'I's flaid t'burying will be spoiled.'

Tola dropped his shovel. 'I reckon thear's a seet ov folk bidden; dost thou know how monny?'

'More nor a hundred.'

'Now't bud reet, Trip wur as gud a Methodee as ivver wor born.'

'Doncaster hez presented Sally's mourning. It's real grand, fit fur ony widow, yuh moind.'

'That's handsome.'

'I nivver seed better black i' my loife. I's sure sho ow't to be chuff.'

'There's now't to be chuff over'd. How is Sally getting on? poor body.'

'In a queer fashion, sho weant leuk at t'bairn's new things. I think me'sen there's ower mich made on her.'

'Have they axed thee to'a tea?'

'Noa; but I sal goa bawt.'

'Is Sykes makking t'coffin?'

'Hi! it's fair splendid, wi' a bed and pillow. I's sure he'll lig comfortable.'

'How thou talks, Poll.'

'Hast thou heeard Tola that they are bawn to hug shoulder height, and twelve locals bear t'pall?'

'Amos told me that.'

'Tea's to be i' t'Methodee schule room, so I's expecting a bit of gud cake.'

'What 'abowt that foreign chap?'

'He does for me, flinging brass away fair a purpose; and owd Granny nivver says a word.'

'It's varry strange.'

'One ov t'mysteries; bud I'll be off, and leuk all over'd. Trip's coffin sud be summut quite extra,' she muttered, 'for Sykes fetched t'trimmings frae Bradford. I's disgusted wi' Sally, sho doesn't tak a bit ov pride i' t'stir. Now, if it hed been me, I wod have shawn off ivvery thing, bud some women hev no pluck, they are full of narves, and sich loike muckment.' When she reached the cottage, a jolly, good-tempered looking man was just coming out.

'What do you want, Missis?' he questioned.

'To leuk at t'coffin.'

'Yuh saw it last neet.'

'That's true; but I want to leuk again.'

'Ye'll get a seet of it i' t'church yard.'

'Church yard indeed!' she cried indignantly. 'I's coming to t'burrying. How much did thou say t'cloth wur a yard?'

'I nivver tel'd thee abawt it,' he replied, with a laugh.

Poll turned abruptly away, and hastened home. She found

her husband getting his dinner. 'Oh, Job, dunnut let Judy tear t' skread i' that bonnet !' she exclaimed, 'I borrowed it ov thi Aunt Betsy, and Rose Mann is bawn to accommodate me wi' a shawl an veil.'

'Sho ow't to,' growled Job, 'for I shut a lot ov brass i' her hoose.'

'Yuh leuk reet nice, mammy,' lisped wee Mary. 'Will yuh bring me a biscuit ?'

'Hi, joy.'

'And one for me,' cried Davey.

'I've putten a pocket on, fair o' purpose, I'll call in a Ruth's and ax what kend of caards there'll be; Johnny Bait hez hed t'ordering on em, soa I sudn't be capped if they hev fancy borders.' She walked on briskly, and presently came face to face with Isaac Robinson.

'Where art t'bawn, Poll ?' he questioned.

'To t'burrying.'

'Hast thou been bidden ?'

'Moind thysen, busybody,' she retorted with asperity.

'If I wor thi husband, lass, I'd teach thee how to be civil.'

'Thou's a clever foil, bud leuk what a seet ov folks; whear hev they comed frae ?'

'Leeds, I sud say. Trip wur well acquainted wi' t'quality, thou knows.'

'He'll do rarely i' heaven, and we are bawn to a grand burrying, lad.'

'For sham, remember t'hoose of mourning !'

'I know'a how to hand manners round, as well as thee; for noabody i' Pudsey hez been at more funeral teas.'

'Hush ! hear's t'Super coming this way.'

'Stop for t'parson, if thou loikes, bud I weant. T'doorstuns ain't pottery-moulded,' she exclaimed, joyfully. 'Sally wod be put out reet, if sho know'd, soa I'll tell her, wen I've t'chance.'

The cottage door was wide open, and a file of men stood in the kitchen.

'T'bearers, I reckon,' she whispered to Nanny Flint, 'let's goa for'ard, and watch how things are carried out.'

A large deal table was placed in the center of the kitchen, and on it rested the coffin. Owd Granny sat at the side, with Rob on her knee, and May at her feet. Charlie stood at Cressey's right hand, his face was troubled, and spasmodic quiverings about the eye-lids told of deep inward emotion.

'T'owd woman is bawn to stop at hoame, Poll,' said Tabby Kitson.

'I nivver heeard t'loike ov that. Who's to follow next to t'corpse?'

'T'furren chap.'

'Are t'childer gooing?'

'Hi; Dont Lister says he'll tak them.'

'Varry affecting; bud seea lass, whose carriage is that?'

'Mr. Osborn's,' whispered Miss Udall.'

'He's a clever nowt, I's flaid t'burying will be ruined wi' his fine ways.'

'I san't eat hoise as mich, if a lot of them nancy-pancy sort cooms to t'tea,' muttered Tabby.

'Hush!' said a bystander, 'Mr. Longley is commencing t'service.'

'Let us pray, friends,' exclaimed an aged minister.

Poll was instantly mute, and clasped her hands reverently.

After prayer, a second gentleman stepped forward, and read part of the fourteenth chapter of St. John.

'Who's that, Sam?' asked Amos.

'Lawyer Barnard, he's coome wi' Doctor Hazlehurst.'

'I nivver heeard a better talker. Is he a Methodee?'

'Hi; a real follerer ov Wesley, one ov t'owd sort, thou knows. Bud see, we are wanted to bear now.'

Two chairs were carried into the street, then the coffin was lifted, and placed on them. Ruth raised the funeral hymn, and at least three hundred voices took up the strain.

'What a pall! it's fair unmensful!' said Tabby. 'Sud us be walking forrards, Poll?'

'Naya, lass, we mun keep i' t'procession.'

'What a grand handkercher ! Whear did thou leet on it ?'

'It wur my mother's Sunday one, I nobbut use t'thing for sich occasions.'

'A gud plan, I nivver seed a deeper border. T'black hez washed well.'

Poll looked gratified, and gave the handkerchief a little flourish.

'I want to talk tul thee, lass. Let's fall behind a bit,' said Tabby.

'I can't abide to,' she sobbed, 'I's getting fair affected.'

'Giv ower foiling, we are none at grave-side yet. Just leuk what a lot ov silk, t'gentlemen hez gotten on thear hats !'

'I'll bebund it cost four shillings a yard,' replied Poll, with renewed zest.

'They'll happen give them to thear missises for aprons at efter.'

'I wish they wod present me wi' one for t'next tide.'

'It wod be grand ; but thear'll be noa sich luck for thee or me.'

The tolling of the church bell attracted their attention. 'We are almost at t'gaates, walk faster,' said Tabby, impatiently.

'It isn't expedient.'

'Expedient ! is that a proper burrying word ?'

'I mostly use it at funerals, and christening teas.'

'I's capped how thou gets axed to soa monny sterings.'

'I allus suit me manners to circumstances. Bud hod thee din, t'bearers have just gone i' t'church.'

'I feel dowled wi this veil over my face. Sud I fling it up ?'

'More loikely put a handkercher to thi e'es, folks allus seems mournful at burryings.'

'And eat rare teas at efter,' Tabby said, with a laugh.

Poll crimsoned, and tossed her head.

'Let's goa hoame for aar drinking, it doesn't appear reet to feed at Sally's expense.'

'Sho owt to hev gathered, I's sure lots wod hev putten a shilling on tul t'plate, and noa doubt t'gentry wod have given *hoife-a-crown*.'

'Amos did mention it, bud owd Granny, and t'furren chap blazed up, and said, "t'Lord had arranged all them matters."'

'They gathered at Tamar Binns, and her's was a fearful fine stir, white veils, thou knows, and sich loike.'

'Hi! bud t'Hardcastle's are a no-thank-ye sort ov folk. I believe Cressey wod rather hev ligged him i' t'grave wi'out bite or sup than hed a plate handed round.' The women staid gossiping long after the procession had passed into Church. Hardcastle had been known to the officiating clergyman for many years, so when the service was finished, he spoke with deep feeling of Trip's zealous labours, and unwearying toil. 'Let us,' he cried, 'like our departed brother, recognise in all pain and distress, the love of our Heavenly Father, so that we likewise may obtain at His coming eternal joy. Whether we have fallen asleep, or be alive on earth; we shall certainly see our beloved with Him, when He cometh to be glorified in His saints; for it is written, "Them also that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him."'

'Mr. Clinton talked var ry nice, Amos; I felt fair suited wi' him mysen,' said Isaac, as they sat comfortably sipping tea in the Wesleyan school-room.

'Varry, bud I sud hev loiked him to hev spokken a bit about Trip's happy ending; he made noa mention ov t' testimony.'

Robinson sighed, and after a moment's reflection said, 'It wur nobbut short.'

'That's true,' interposed Sam, 'but t' poor lad hadn't mich toime; death hed clutched him afore Tommy put t' question thou knows.'

'I's sur it wur grand. What more wod ye hev?' asked Ruth, crossly.

'My Peg's wur a seet more edifying,' exclaimed old Jacob; 'it set me goeing on t' road, I tell yuh.'

'Whativver wor it,' cried several women, eagerly.

'Did any ov yuh know Betty Wick?' he inquired com-

'I did; sho wur a fearful gud liver,' replied Ruth.

'One ov Wesley's awn converts, I've heard me mother say,' responded Tabby.

'Well t' owd woman hez cawered on my hearthstun, and talked about John's piety monny an hour. When sho wor bawn hoame Betty allus said to Peg, "My lass, if I dee afore thee, and t' Lord permits, I'll sound a trumpet when thi toime cooms.'

'And did sho?'

'Sho did that, I sall nivver forget hearing it blow; t'sound rings i' my ears now.'

'Tell us, lad, abawt Peg's testimony, doa.'

Tears of mingled pride and sorrow blinded Jacob's eyes. 'I thought ye'd heard it afore,' he said softly.

'Noa, noa,' interposed Ruth; 'thear's part strangers i' t'room, soa speak up.'

'I'm an owd man friends, all aloin i' t' world, bud I know what's reet, and sometoimes I tak Peg's Bible and spell out sick varses as sho wur particular fond ov. I allus fend great comfort i' those blessed words ov t' Lord's—"I will come again," for I believe we sal know each other at efter. My missis and me liv'd i' peace fifty-three years, Peg wur allus a Chapel goer, bud I wur a careless chap and that tewed her. One day abawt a month afore sho dee'd, I said, "joy! is there owt I can do'a for thee." "Noa lad," she answered, "Except thou'll give thi heart to God." "Happen he weant hev it," I replied. Sho smiled, and took my hand i'to hers and whispered, "Try Him." I made noa response, for to tell t'truth my heart wur fair brakken. Soa sho went on her'sen, "Betty Wick promist to blow a trumpet if all wur well wi' me. If thou hears it, Jacob, wilt thou believe i' God's mercy, and give ower freeing." "Yes," I said, just to pacify her. Well t'toime came when Peg hed to cross t'river: friends and neighbours assembled to hear her testimoney, and see her dee; I stood by t' bed dodering i' iverry limb. Sho ligged still for a long toime wi' her ees fixed on t' chamber window: suddenly sho commenced to praise God. My wife wornt to

be called a scholar, bud that morning it seemed as if t' words fair flowed. Ye cudn't think how grand sho spoke ov t' Heavenly Kingdom and t' Angels raand t' Throne.'

'I remember all that,' exclaimed Ruth, 'and how happy sho leuked when thou said, "I'll seek the Lord, Peg."'

'And I hev sought, and fund Him,' he cried joyfully. Doa yuh moind how still sho wur just afore t' last gasp?'

'I doa lad.'

'Well, t' trumpet sounded then, I heard note at first a far way oif, then a bit nearer, and i' t'end it blew close to t'bed. Sho leuked at me earnestly and her mouth opened, bud no'a words caame; I understood her though. Sho wanted to say, "Dost thou hear," soa I whispered, "Hi lass I doa," then sho tossed up both arms, and just as t'trumpet ceased somebody muttered, "She's gone."'

'It's wonderful,' said a tall, dark looking man.

And such things are mysterious. Still no one who had listened to Jacob, could have doubted, that he believed implicitly in the sounding of the trumpet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GREEN PASTURES.

'YESTERDAY was the 24th, Robert,' said Grace, one beautiful spring morning, when the whole world was bursting into bloom.

'Well love.'

'Barnton's creditors had their first meeting. Have you heard anything regarding "Castle Rushon?"'

'No.'

'That is strange.'

Ward tossed the *Mercury* down impatiently. 'By Jove it is,' he exclaimed, 'Pawkins said he would see me when the meeting was over.'

'Don't rely on that man.'

'Why?'

'He is a rogue.'

'That is strong language. Could you substantiate it?'

'Events will do that.'

'I am somewhat anxious myself. What would you advise me to do?'

'Waste no more time.'

'I am not wasting time,' he replied, hotly, 'but some intimation ought to be sent before I do anything.'

'Who from?'

'The trustee, you know I have printing expenses to pay.'

'Has no one sent in the account?'

'No.'

'There is something wrong. Do consult a solicitor.'

'Law is expensive.'

'To sit still and be swindled is more so.'

'I can not possibly be cheated,' he replied, doggedly: "Castle Rushon" is mine; the creditors have only printing money, and Pawkins assures me it is all safe.'

'Do not quote him pray, Robert. I believe he is a double-dyed scoundrel.'

'You are unjust, Grace.'

'Time will prove that; at present I have no rest night or day.'

Ward jumped up and said, angrily, 'Mind that book does not hang Grace, like a millstone round your neck.'

'Remove the danger then.'

'Well don't worry any more; I will pop over to Lexton and see after things. Have you mended my gloves?'

'Yes, love.'

'Fetch them and *Punch*, then I'll be off.'

'If you find anything wrong go to a lawyer at once.'

'Will you make a cocoa-nut cake for tea then?' he asked, coaxingly.

'No, sir, that is for publication day.'

'Has the *Era* come this mail?'

'Yes, but do go or you will be too late for the 10-30.'

Robert walked quickly, and had just turned into Boar-lane, when some one called out, 'Good morning, Ward; what's the hurry?'

'Lexton, Mr. Mawson,' he replied, pleasantly.

'About Barnton's smash, I presume.'

'Did the creditors meet yesterday?'

'They did.'

'You have lost heavily, I fear.'

'I am in for a thousand.'

'Did you hear anything respecting my book?' questioned Robert, nervously.

'What is it called?'

'"Castle Rushon."'

'Cain Pawkins had it on his sheet of claims. Didn't you know that?'

'Know what?'

'That Barnton borrowed £100 of Cain twelve months since. He could not repay it, and so made over "Castle Rushon" to him.'

'Made over my property,' gasped Robert.

'You sold Sandy copyright, I suppose?'

'I never did.'

'Look alive then, for as things stand to-day the book is Pawkins's.'

'It is not, thundered Robert.'

'Barnton, has deceived Cain then; for he is an honourable man, and would not knowingly do wrong.'

'He is a scamp, and a hypocrite.'

'You are quite mistaken, Pawkins is treasurer for the Juvenile S. O. C., and a most zealous Church worker.'

'Let us hope then that "Castle Rushon" and its copy-right are safe.'

'I could trust Cain with every penny I possess,' exclaimed Mr. Mawson vehemently.

Robert laughed scornfully, and gave an outline of his last conversation with Pawkins.

The gentleman paled, and appeared anxious to get away; so Ward laid one hand determinedly on his arm, saying, 'You must hear me, justice demands it.'

'You have been treated abominably, still do not I beg— deal hardly with the man.'

'How dare you ask me, to show mercy to such a swindler? '

'Barnton is the sharper, Cain his dupe.'

'I think otherwise.'

'I'll stake my life on his honesty, a better fellow never existed. But I am dreadfully hungry, will you come to "The Queen" for lunch?'

'No, thanks, I must consult a solicitor at once.'

'Anxious to "unchain the dogs of war." How unchristian.'

Ward frowned. 'I want nothing but justice,' he responded, warmly.

'What a pity you did not enquire into things sooner. This is a go-a-head age you know.'

'I have been a fool.'

'So you have, like that old simpleton who took a lantern and went forth to search for an honest man.'

'I shall find one if Diogenes failed,' Robert said haughtily.

'If you want a cute lawyer go to Philemon Wiseman.'

'Whatever must I do?' thought Ward, 'and from whom ask advice.' Suddenly the remembrance of Dont Lister's will, flashed to his mind. 'I'll off to Cuthbert and Barnard's,' he cried, impulsively. He entered the office, and asked a clerk 'if Mr. Barnard was disengaged.'

'I believe so,' was the answer. 'Please come this way.'

The door of an inner room swang softly open. 'Lycurgus the Spartan,' muttered Ward, and as the majestic figure rose to greet him, he instinctively recognized the power of 'The Law—'

'Good morning, sir: you desire a consultation I presume, will you be brief and explicit,' said Mr. Barnard.

Robert turned red, and pale; then commenced nervously to relate all circumstances connected with 'Castle Rushon.'

'Who holds manuscript?' was the first question.

'I do,' Ward responded.

'That's good,' will you leave the matter entirely to me?'

'Most gladly.'

'Call in again next Thursday.'

Robert felt wonderfully cheered, and walked out with bouyant steps; What a blessing Grace has been spared this bother. I verily believe if she had come across Mawson it would have killed her, for women are so soft and quite unable to cope with difficulties; he then hailed a cab and drove to Ellesmere-street. 'Is your mistress in?' he said to the maid.

'No sir, she went out sometime ago.'

'Did she say where she was going, Madge?'

'To Cressey Hardcastle's.'

'I need not expect her just yet,' he replied with a shrug.

'You look awfully white, Mr. Robert, has anything happened?'

'No, my girl.'

'I am sure you are ill then,' she said quickly.

'What nonsense,' he responded crossly.

'I must speak, for I dun't like to hear you talking about Plyadees and Greeat Bears: then there's that Wizard's head on the study table, do'a leave witchcraft alone, master.'

'You must be dreaming, I know nothing about witchcraft.'

'I wish I was; but tell me, sir, what you want wi' all that plaster rubbish.'

'I am learning Phrenology.'

'Larning the devil's oligy. You are on the broad road, Mr. Robert, I tell you.'

'I am not going unwarned at any rate,' he replied running up stairs.

'There will be a grand flare-up when he finds out what I've done,' laughed the girl, 'but I can't abide idolatry.'

Robert sat down at his desk, and was soon absorbed writing a letter ; at last he drew a long sigh, and nodded his head as if perfectly satisfied, then walked to the window. Rain was falling in a business-like way that was thoroughly depressing. 'What a miserable afternoon, I have a good mind to go and fetch Grace,' he exclaimed, ringing the bell violently.

'Is dinner ready?' he asked, when Madge answered the summons.

'No, sir, Miss Ward said it was to be served at five to-day ; but luncheon is laid.'

'All right, make me a cup of good strong coffee in the old dominion pot.'

'I always make it strong,' replied the girl with a toss of her pretty head.

Ward took his lunch, and whistled a tune to the canary, then went into the hall and took down his hat. 'I am going to meet my sister Madge ; if any visitors call say I shall be seeable at four.'

'A boy has just been asking for you.'

'A printer's devil, I suppose?'

'Yes, sir.'

'From *The Manxman*, or *Chronicle*?'

'I don't know.'

'Did you not inquire?'

'No, I forgot.'

'How stupid.'

'I told him to call again.'

'At what time?'

'Six, sir.'

There are deserts in England, as well as in the burning East, thought Robert, as he posted down Greenwood Fold to Old Granny's. The shop was unchanged. Yarmouth bloaters and washed potatoes seemed fixtures in the small window. Cressey still sat in the corner, or as she termed it t'chimley-neuk ; her broad frilled cap was tied on with a black silk handkerchief, the cotton one being put away to please Sally, who had grown

and on twenty shillings a week. Grace was at her side
sitting patiently to this grievance.

'It'll none matter to Trip, bud t'lass thinks it does, and sich
seduceses are loike thorns i' t' flesh, hard to get out.'

'I am so glad, Sarah has come to you,' said Grace, 'are the
le folks noisy?'

'No'a, miss, they are uncommon gud, particular Rob; I loike
hev them running raand; it sets me agate thinking ov God's
iding hand among green pastures.'

'Has He dealt tenderly with you, Granny?'

'Tenderly! why joy, yuh'wod be capped if I tell'd ye how
e's led me all me years. I've been loike a sucking babe on
loving parent's breast.'

Just at the moment Robert entered noiselessly. 'Come
t'rard, sir,' said Granny, 'yuh leuk wet and stormed.'

Ward shivered and drew a chair close to the fire. 'How
oes the world with you, Cressey?' he questioned kindly.

'Middling, t'Lord keeps sending me teligrams; soa I's
akking ready to mount upwards.'

'What kind of telegrams?'

'Sudden pangs ov pain.'

'Severe ones.'

'Hi! and mostly at neets.'

'How do you receive them?'

'Wi' praise for sure. I leuk at t'stars glittering i' t'sky
ad say it's reet Father, remember Thy covenant.'

'So you like to watch the stars,' said Grace.

'I doa that; them little spots i' t'heavens are books filled
n' promises.'

'Can you read them?'

'Hi, rarely.'

'What do they tell you?'

'Ov t'creation, and that wonderful toime when a child
nur born in Bethlehem. They whisper allso ov Geth-
emane and Pilate's judgment hall; then I tell them ov
hat neet long agoa when, wi'-a broken heart, I knelt down

and prayed. Happen ye wod loike to hear abowt t'Lord's dealings, sir.'

Robert gave one quick glance at the grand old face so beautiful in its deeply-rooted peace. 'I should,' he answered.

Granny smiled, and complacently folded her hands over her snowy apron. 'It's nearly forty-five years,' she said, 'sin my Jonas dee'd. He went out to his wark one morning as usual, and a bit efter noon a mon came to say he'd been found speechless i' York-rooad and takken to t'Infirmiry. I went day by day to ax how he were, and hung about t'building hofe crazed, pining for news; at last doctors said it was hopeless, he moight put on a week, or he moight goa ony minute. I'd four lile childer to leuk efter, and tears fell fast as I stered t'meal intul thear porrage that efternoon; well we went toa bed, bud my hêad warked so that I thowt t'pillows wor stones. I liggid still awhile, but nature conquered. I jumped up all ov a sudden, and walked straight to t'infirmiry. A true woman's love is a moighty thing, and though frozen snaw crunched under my feet and t'cruel wind blew reet i' my face, I felt nowt but a burning heat i' my temples and a grasping pain at my heart. I crept close up to t'building, and walked abowt watching t'leets i' t'windows till a church clock struck four, then a fearful trembling seized my limbs and I sunk reet down. I dunnot know how long I laid, bud all at once some one seemed toa say "Leuk up Cressey." I did soa, and seed all t'heavens a blaze wi' stars. Who made them, comed i' to my moind, and t'answer wor "God." I gloored at them till a soft voice murmured "I will be a Father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow." "Oh! God," I exclaimed, "promise toa help me i' this hour o' need." Again t'peace-giving power whispered, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." I know'd then who spoke to my poor bleeding heart, so kneeling down sobbed, "I believe thy word, nivver let me want;" and frea that hour

my bread and water hez allus been sure, though I've some-toimes thrown t' last bit ov cooil on tul t'fire, and spent my last penny.'

'What did you do then?'

'Wait on t'Lord.'

'Has He ever failed you?'

'Nivver,' cried the old woman, vehemently. 'I've been both donned and fed out ov heaven's treasury; why He even sent His messenger on t'neet ov Jonas' burrying. We liggid him to rest one Seturday efternoon, and when all t' friends and t'neighbours hed gone hoome I shut t'hoose door and sat down to think things over'd. Thear's bread, tea, and a lile slice ov butter i' t'cubbord I thowt, bud were's t' twopence for t' bairns' milk to coom frea. Soa I got agate praying at once, and told God ivvery thing just as I am telling ye; well, e'now somebody rapped at t'door. "May I coom for'ard, Cressey?" said a mon called Dozey Careless. He'd been a mate ov Jonas', soa I didn't feel capped toa see him. One ov t'childer climed on tul his knee and dropped off to sleep. When I wokkend t'lad thear wur hofe a crawn i' his hand. Three days at efter Mr. Lynn's workmen made a collection, and presented me wi' three pounds fifteen. I opened this shop almost direct, and went out to buy and sell owd clothes.'

'Could you make anything by that?' asked Robert, with evident surprise.

'Hi, sir, I bowt ov respectable Misseses, and mended ivvery thing afore I sold them.'

'What did the children do while you were out?'

'I sent them toa a dame's schule, and Tillie, t'eldest lass, wur soon a fine scolard. Sho cud count, read, and doa a sampler splendid.'

'Have you lived in this house all the time?' said Grace.

'Hi, I've allus stook to t'foundation.'

'You would not like to leave now, I suppose.'

'A dray and six osses could not pull me frea t'owd

place, for ivvery stone is cemented wi' prayer. Sally pleaded hard for me to stop i' Pudsey, bud I said "Lass, thou'll hev toa be a Ruth and follow me, or bide by thee'sen."

'This cottage should be called 'The Sanctuary,' said Ward.

'That's true,' replied Cressey, huskily, 'for t'Lord hez reigned i' it mony a year. Just think how wonderfully He hez provided for Trip's, Sally.'

'Well?' said Robert, inquiringly.

'Well,' Granny repeated slowly, 'hez He not verified them thear words ov Scriptur, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." T'sovereign Trip lent Charlie hez been repaid a hundred fold.'

'I am delighted to hear it,' replied Robert; he then turned to his sister, and said 'Come, Grace, we really must go.'

'May God bless them both,' exclaimed Cressey, as the door closed.

'What a dear creature Mrs. Hardcastle is,' remarked Grace, as she took her seat at the dinner table.

'She has taught me a lesson,' responded Ward. 'Her simple, child-like trust in God is astonishing.'

'Not to a Christian,' rejoined Grace, with a bright smile.

Robert remained silent for a few minutes, then gently told her about Pawkins, and of his interview with Mr. Barnard.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HINDOO TENET.

'MARY, what time do you expect Nettie?' asked Mr. Singleton, as he stood on the rug, with his back to the fire.

'Any minute; I sent Tom to meet her more than an hour ago.'

'Here she is,' he exclaimed joyously, and in another moment Nettie rushed in. 'Welcome home, Pet,' her father said fondly.

'I am so glad to see you again. Please give me a kiss, papa.'

'You look charming, darling,' Mrs. Singleton whispered, 'the smoke of Leeds has evidently agreed with you.'

'It is the pleasure of seeing me that has brought such a brilliant bloom to her cheeks,' Mr. Singleton said, with a laugh.

'So it is, papa. I have been dreaming of home for many a day.'

'How is Joe?'

'Very well: he is coming next month.' 'But where is Dora?'

'She went with James to Burnside early this morning.'

'They might have waited for me,' she replied with a pout.

'We only received your telegram at 11.30, and they were in the saddle before nine.'

'What is the last news from India?' questioned Mrs. Singleton.

'Harry is still on the hills.'

'Having a jolly time, I suppose? Has he been tiger hunting yet?'

'I hope not,' she answered with a shudder.

'I presume he has not turned Buddhist?'

'Decidedly not; still he writes very kindly of the natives.'

'Has he visited any of their temples?'

'Yes, one or two.'

'What opinion has he formed of their holy men? I mean those who sit and howl in mud all the live-long day.'

'His descriptions are frightful; but there is one thing, I think, we Christians would do well to imitate.'

'What is that?' her father questioned with mock gravity.

'A loving care for animals.'

'I fancy that is a religious tenet of theirs.'

'Harry says he once went over a most interesting institution for maimed animals: where the blind, lame, and old

of every species are received willingly, and nursed with the utmost tenderness until they die."

'How is the hospital supported?' Mr. Singleton enquired with a smile.

'By voluntary subscription; for the Hindoos consider it a good and pious work. Horses, cows, dogs, and monkeys all eat their fill in this happy resting spot.'

'If you were in the Punjaub, mousie might get pensioned,' said Mrs. Singleton.

'I would not part with him for all the jewels in a Maharajah's turban.'

'What of Eastern scenery?'

He speaks of gigantic hills towering thousands of feet above the level of the sea; of radiant valleys carpeted with flowers of every hue; and forests with dense jungles, where magpies, and bright-plumed parrots keep company; but adds, in this Paradise leopards lurk, waiting for prey, and sully the lovely picture like human traitors do our peaceful English homes.'

'Treachery is the blackest sin in crime's calendar,' remarked Mr. Singleton.

'Worse than murder, father?'

'Yes, ten times, for life is often taken through momentary passion, or intense jealousy; but treachery is leisurely and systematically carried out. It is the mainspring of Satanic machinery, and boxed in hell's deepest gloom.'

'God grant my daughter may escape its poisoned dart,' murmured Mrs. Singleton, laying the *Graphic* on the table.

'I hope so,' Nettie responded fervently; 'but I do wish Dora would come, it is almost time to dress for dinner.'

Next morning she ordered Jessie round, and cantered to Burnside. Peter was waiting at the Lodge gate, and triumphantly led her in.

'Are you glad to see me back, Hannah?' she asked kindly.

'I am that, Miss, all last night I felt so happy thinking of His coming.'

'Who are you expecting?'

'The Master, oh! child, child, are you still without the joy of this blessed Hope?'

'I am longing and wearying for light, Hannah,' she replied.

'Longing for light,' the woman repeated. 'Surely the first rays of that glorious dawn has broken.' 'Pray, and trim your lamp quickly, for our deliverance draweth nigh.'

'I know it is written "Prepare to meet thy God," but I fear the grave and judgment.'

Hannah looked at her earnestly. 'The order is,' she said, 'Prepare to meet thy God,' and not 'Prepare to go down into the tomb.'

'Still we must cross the river of death.'

'If your papa, Miss Nettie, was travelling in a far off land, and between him and you stood a long, dark tunnel, and he sent a message, saying "Prepare to meet me," would you take fright, and cry "My Father bids me go through a horrible tunnel. What can I have done to anger him?"'

'No, I should count every minute until he came.'

'You would not feel terrified?'

'Certainly not.'

'If you were would he be hurt?'

'Decidedly.'

'Why?'

'Because I should evince a lack of love and confidence.'

'Think, then, how you must grieve your gentle Saviour by doubting His word; for has He not said, "I will come again."'

'Is it this hope that makes you always peaceful, Hannah?'

'Yes, it brightens everything; but look, there is some one at the gate.'

'It is Uncle William, so I will say good morning.'

'You must go home at once, love,' said Osborn, as he assisted her to mount.

‘Why, Uncle?’

‘Mr. Larkings is dying and wants to see Russell.’

‘I understood he was much better.’

‘Consumption is treacherous; do not linger, time is precious.’

‘Farewell, for the present; remember you are to dine with us to-day.’

‘What a fine horsewoman,’ exclaimed Osborn, ‘I declare she is putting Jessie at yon five-barred gate, and by Jove they are over.’ He stood for a second tapping his boots with his riding whip, then turned and walked leisurely to Kent View.’

When Nettie got home she found Russell sketching on the balcony. ‘Have the Russians landed in England?’ he asked, archly.

‘No,’ she replied shortly. Patty was passing through the hall, she paused and said ‘A packet from India has just arrived, Miss.’

‘Where is it?’

‘In your dressing-room.’

‘Is mamma at home?’

‘No,’ interposed Russell, ‘Aunt went out an hour ago, and Dora is writing a love-letter.’

‘Mr. Larkings is very ill; you are to go at once, sir.’

‘Humbug. Who said so?’

‘Your father.’

The lad’s eyes instantly filled with tears. ‘Larkings has always been awfully good to me,’ he said, huskily, ‘better even than Uncle Joe.’

‘Here comes Bess, pray go love,’ she responded, sorrowfully.

‘What must I say to Mrs. Larkings?’

‘Express our sympathy.’

‘I wish aunt was in, you girls can’t tell a fellow anything.’

‘Let your heart speak.’

‘Fudge!’ he replied disdainfully.

‘Now for my precious packet; I wonder what it contains,’

she rushed up stairs, and hurriedly broke the seal. A locket and bundle of letters dropt out; a death-like pallor crept over her face, and she stood as one entranced, murmuring 'What does this mean?' Presently there was a gentle tap at the door, and Mrs. Singleton glided in.

'What news from Harry, dear?'

A bitter sob was the only response.

'Darling, what has happened?'

'Harry has returned my letters, without any explanation. Mamma, what does it mean?'

Mrs. Singleton threw one arm tenderly round her. 'Have you and he been quarreling, Nettie?'

'No, mother.'

'Then some enemy has been at work; trust in God, my daughter, He will make it clear.'

'Oh! Harry, you might have sent me one line,' she gasped.

'Tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong and He shall comfort thy heart, my child.'

'What can have caused him to treat me thus?'

'Satan, the dark king's agents are everywhere; but fear not, Jehovah ruleth over all.'

'I know that mother, still this cruel blow has stunned me.'

'Lie down, and rest awhile; I will ask papa to excuse you appearing this evening.'

In another hour Mr. Singleton ran quickly into his wife's room. 'Mary,' he exclaimed, 'poor Larkings is gone.' 'But what is the matter; has anything else occurred?'

'Yes, to Nettie.'

'Nettie; what in the world bothers her?'

'Harry, has returned her letters without one word.'

'By Jupiter, that presumptuous boy shall pay dearly for it.'

'Gilbert, do not be hasty.'

'Hasty,' he cried. 'If the rascal were here I would horse-whip him within an inch of his life.'

'He may be suffering the same as Nettie.'

Robert sat down at his desk, and was soon absorbed writing a letter ; at last he drew a long sigh, and nodded his head as if perfectly satisfied, then walked to the window. Rain was falling in a business-like way that was thoroughly depressing. 'What a miserable afternoon, I have a good mind to go and fetch Grace,' he exclaimed, ringing the bell violently.

'Is dinner ready?' he asked, when Madge answered the summons.

'No, sir, Miss Ward said it was to be served at five to-day ; but luncheon is laid.'

'All right, make me a cup of good strong coffee in the old dominion pot.'

'I always make it strong,' replied the girl with a toss of her pretty head.

Ward took his lunch, and whistled a tune to the canary, then went into the hall and took down his hat. 'I am going to meet my sister Madge ; if any visitors call say I shall be seeable at four.'

'A boy has just been asking for you.'

'A printer's devil, I suppose?'

'Yes, sir.'

'From *The Manxman*, or *Chronicle*?'

'I don't know.'

'Did you not inquire?'

'No, I forgot.'

'How stupid.'

'I told him to call again.'

'time?'

he deserts in England, as well as in the burning East, Robert, as he posted down Greenwood Fold to Old The shop was unchanged. Yarmouth bloaters and seemed fixtures in the small window. Cressey corner, or as she termed it t'chimley-neuk ; a cap was tied on with a black silk handkerchief, being put away to please Sally, who had grown

'She ruled over Larkings to the hour of his death ; so everything is willed according to her pleasure.'

'Then she is sole mistress of land and money, I presume?'

'No, your cousin has been just for once. Do you remember that orphan boy?'

'Very well ; he was Theo's sister's son.'

'Well, Larkings wished to leave all to his wife, without reserve, but Esther objected strongly, saying, "The Kent View estate belonged to Athel, and he must have it," so after a slight contention she got her way, and the lad at her death comes in for the lands.'

'But she has never allowed Athel, since their marriage, to live with his uncle.'

'Esther is peculiar in some things, but depend upon it, dear, she has her own creed of honour.'

'I wonder why she sent the boy from the only home he ever knew.'

'A constitutional dislike to children.'

'Preposterous ; I know she is never happy without Russell at her side.'

'Ah ! but he is William's picture, and that makes all the difference in the world,' laughed Mr. Singleton.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAUDABLE PRINCIPLES.

It was evening ; every turret and gable was bathed in the superb glow of sunset : some stray gleams of wondrous radiancy, were throwing a few playful beams over Nettie's pensive face ; the girl's reverie was so profound, that she did not hear a light footstep crossing the room until a hand fell on her shoulder, and her mother softly whispered 'Nettie !'

'I am so glad you have come, mamma. I want to ask you something.'

'Stay one moment, pet; I have some good news to tell first. Mrs. Larkings is waiting for me in the drawing room, and Miss Chester arrives to-morrow.'

'Agnes!' exclaimed Nettie joyfully, 'have you invited her, mamma?'

'Yes love, Doctor Ivon said a pleasant companion would be beneficial.'

'I am so glad; will you ask Mrs. Larkings to stay dinner, I want to see her.'

'Certainly, darling.'

A few minutes afterwards her Godmother came in. 'You are on the invalid list, I hear,' she said, graciously.

'Yes,' replied Nettie.

'You decidedly look ill. Is it a nervous attack?'

'No,' interposed Mrs. Singleton, hastily.

'Be more careful in future, child, and guard yourself from shocks; they are bad for the system.'

'How can I do so?'

'By keeping all emotions under control, true affection is rarely appreciated. I am speaking from experience, so don't look incredulous, dear.'

The girl's eyelids quivered, and her lips parted.

'Hush! love,' cried Mrs. Larkings, in a voice of admonition, 'do not, I beg, mention Harry to me, his conduct is without excuse, what he was, and what he is, must now be a matter of perfect indifference.'

'You are more severe than papa,' she responded sadly.

'I dare say, and the best thing you can do; is to dig a grave and bury every remembrance of Henderson.'

'Oh! Mrs. Larkings.'

'Deem me adamant if you like; but I will not alter a tittle of what I have said.'

'Treachery, has occasioned the separation,' moaned Nettie.

'Quite possible, but a woman must measure back the scorn, meted out to her.'

'Could you do so?'

Her Godmother's face became pale and rigid. 'I did long years ago, and advise you to do the same.'

'Had you no pity?'

'None.'

'You remind me of Elizabeth Tudor,' she said indignantly.

'I have often thought that myself; for instance, I never forgive an injury.'

'But this mystery shall be cleared,' Nettie exclaimed impetuously.

'Probably it may,' remarked Mrs. Larkings, drawing out her watch. 'I suppose Miss Chester is coming, mind you bring her to Kent View, Russell has been collecting some wonderful specimens lately.'

'What queer fancies he has.'

'He is decidedly a genius, and some day will make his mark in the world.'

'As a naturalist?'

'Very likely, poor dear Mr. Larkings used to say, "Esther, that boy might have been your son, he is so clever."'

'Papa is urging uncle to send him to West College next term.'

'I cannot part with him; your father ought to remember my lonely condition.'

'Mamma says you are petting him to death.'

'What nonsense, Russell is very differently constituted to most children, and his organization is extremely sensitive. What book is that?'

'Oliver Twist.'

'By Dickens, I presume.'

'Yes.'

'Unhealthy food, and perfect trash. I am astonished that such works are allowed in Christian households.'

'Charles Dickens has done immense good.'

'Immense evil you mean.'

'No I do not; think what he has achieved. Our Work-houses are no longer dens of starvation.'

'They were never anything of the sort; don't allow your judgment to be influenced by a novelist. He simply wrote to suit his own ends.'

'He laboured for the poor, and the oppressed.'

'I say to engender idleness, and over-feed paupers.'

'Mrs. Larkings, (there was a world of reproof in Nettie's gentle tone), England owes much to the author of "Oliver Twist."'

'Not financially. If his views were carried out our poor rates would be considerably heavier.'

'I do not understand rates.'

'But I understand that pernicious books ought to be suppressed. That mendacious and wickedly-exaggerated story of Harriet Beecher Stowe's was sole cause of the break up in America.'

'And gave freedom to thousands of slaves.'

'Made discontented paupers, you mean, by a double robbery.'

'We don't agree on this painful subject. Let us talk of something else.'

'Why?'

'I am a strong Abolitionist, and fear to offend you.'

'I don't take umbrage easily, but I feel it my duty to try and uproot all the radical opinions that Joe has incensed you with.'

'Uncle never taught me anything wrong, and never urges his opinions so as to cause offence. He equals Daniel O'Connell in that respect.'

'Daniel O'Connell. What on earth do you know about that demented Irishman?'

'Not very much.'

Mrs. Larkings gave a sigh of relief. 'We were speaking of slavery having the authority of Scripture,' she continued.

'You must have entirely mistaken me, Scripture has not been mentioned,' cried Nettie.

'Still, we are told "The son of the bondswoman shall not be equal with the son of the free." The Patriarchs, you know, were all slave owners.'

'But we belong to Christ.'

'Quite correct; but our Saviour never denounced slavery as a sin.'

'Still He ordered the Apostles to go preach the gospel to every creature; and I acknowledge as brothers, all who belong to Christ.'

'But we must have grades, and distinctions in the church militant, just as there will be in the church triumphant.'

'Some of us, I fear, will then realise those words, "The first shall be last."'

'Thank God I have always upheld laudable principles, so need not dread being placed in a subordinate position.'

'Surely, Esther,' interposed Mrs. Singleton, 'you do not believe in supererogation.'

'Don't be absurd, Mary; I only teach my tenantry to be content, in the station where Almighty God has placed them, and not run head over heels trying to imitate their superiors.'

'You don't admire this go-a-head age.'

'I do not.'

'Nor its advancement?'

'No.'

'Why?'

'Because of the increase of sin and infidelity.'

'Perhaps you are right,' responded Mrs. Singleton, with a sigh.

'I am sure of it. Look at the pride high wages have engendered in servant girls. When I was young they used to dress neatly in print, or stuff, but in these days they render themselves perfectly ridiculous, in their endeavours to dress better than their mistresses.'

'I confess that is unsuitable.'

'Preposterous you mean. We shall see the badge of servitude surmounted with a crown just now.'

'Nay! nay cousin, red republicanism will never sway England.'

'Don't be so certain. We are verging on dangerous times.'

'God holds the reins of destiny, Esther.'

'True, yet I feel convinced that days of trial and tribulation are upon us; the rising billows will have to be faced.'

'Unity is strength,' murmured Nettie.

'What did you say?' Mrs. Larkings asked sharply.

'That unity is strength.'

'Where will you find it? Not in politics, I think.'

'No, I meant religiously.'

'A delusive hope, for Faith has fled, and our Church divided.'

'Love will soon cement if we extend the hand of fellowship to other Christians,' said Mrs. Singleton.

'We cannot do that,' she replied, icily.

'Yes, we can,' exclaimed Nettie.

'How, pray?'

'I cannot tell, but Jesus will if you ask Him.'

'Ah! but scepticism is advancing quickly, and our Church, like a beautiful ship, will sink before the storm.'

'Sink! never. She may be stranded by unsound doctrines and angry contentions, but soon the Master will be aboard, and take the helm, then all sections of Christians will become one flock, and cleave to one shepherd.'

'A blissful dream, child; but alas, only a dream,' said Mrs. Larkings, dejectedly.

'To me it is a blessed reality.'

'Well, the belief is harmless; so I have no objection to your holding it.'

'Christ has promised to return quickly, and man's scoffing shall never make me doubt.'

Mrs. Larkings looked earnestly at the pale, determined face; then turning to Mrs. Singleton remarked 'Those rooks keep up an everlasting chatter.'

'Yes, they are rather noisy, Esther, but Holly Bank would

not be home without them : hark ! there goes the dinner gong.'

Agnes arrived early next morning, and Russell, like the generality of boys, admired tall women immensely. He had not forgotten his promise, and immediately presented her with a case of bumble bees.

'I declare, sir,' she exclaimed, while criticising his present, 'if you were not so young you should be my chosen knight.'

'Are you in earnest, Miss Chester?' he asked, flushing with delight.

'Decidedly.'

'Then I will strive to become famous, write poems and dedicate them to you.'

'I presume you are a disciple of Tennyson.'

'No, Homer ; his works will live for ever.'

'For ever?' questioned Nettie, archly.

'Don't be sarcastic, cousin, Mrs. Larkings says I write divinely.'

'I reverence the Ancients myself,' Agnes responded, with ill-disguised amusement.

Russell jumped up, and impulsively cried.

"Then had his ruin crowned Atides' joy,
But Venus trembled for the prince of Troy :
Unseen she came, and burst the golden band :
And left an empty helmet in his hand."

'No more of that nonsense, Russell,' Mr. Singleton said, sternly, 'there is nothing so contemptible as egotism.'

'I am no egotist, sir,' he retorted proudly.

'You appear one, when speaking so much before ladies.'

Agnes bent down, and put one hand playfully on the boy's shoulder, 'Tell your uncle we were studying charades,' she whispered softly.

Russell coloured painfully, yet said what she told him.

'Oh ! that alters the case ; but go at once,' for Mrs. Larkings's carriage is waiting for you.'

'I think, Miss Chester, you have been amusing yourself at my nephew's expense,' Mr. Singleton said, with a laugh.

'I might have received an offer of marriage if you had not so cruelly interrupted our *tele-a-tele*. Boys of fourteen are very susceptible to Cupid's dart,' she responded, with a little pout.

'Eve's wiles, you mean.'

'Boys' hearts are never broken,' she replied, saucily.

'Granted, still a woman's face is sometimes so indelably stamped on memory, that years fail to efface it.'

'What if the same man loved six times.'

'His first idol would remain supreme.'

'I perceive, you believe in first love only.'

'I maintain the first thrill of pure affection kindles that flame, which lights a man through the darkest hours of life.' Mr. Singleton paused abruptly, for his eye fell on Nettie; he stooped and kissed her passionately, then opened the window and went quickly out.'

Agnes stood for sometime, silently admiring her well-shaped foot: at length she said, languidly, 'I saw Miss Ward at Leeds Station.'

'I am so glad. Where was she going?'

'To Lexton; there is some bother over Mr. Robert's book.'

'He has had an amount of trouble lately.'

'It is ended now, I think.'

'Successfully?'

'For the Wards, you mean?'

'Of course.'

'Victory for them, would be defeat for the other side, you know.'

'Pawkins is a scoundrel. Papa says he ought to be imprisoned.'

'Mr. Singleton is a barrister, so I will not presume to offer an opinion after his; but, certainly, to be forced to yield up stolen goods must be a foretaste of hell.'

'Did Grace say when she would write?'

'No! may I ask what has become of mousie?'

‘He is quite well.’

‘Has Harry sent the Magpie yet?’

‘Have you not heard? Agnes.’

Miss Chester turned hastily; ‘Good heavens, child,’ she cried, ‘what ails you?’

‘Nothing, but heart sorrow.’

‘My poor darling, tell me all about it; there is no balm like sympathy.’

Nettie spoke tenderly of Harry, and tried to gloss over his cowardly conduct.

‘I never liked Henderson, but I despise him now,’ Agnes said, bitterly. ‘Come along, pet, and have a canter, that will do you a world of good.’

CHAPTER XXVI.

SING A SONG FOR SIXPENCE.

‘Soa thou’s yielded!’ Mrs. Pawkins exclaimed, derisively.

‘Mr. Hedgeway said I must,’ Cain answered.

‘I’d be maister ov me’sen, if I were thee, thou coward.’

‘Take care Maud,’ he said menacely.

‘We’al thou art a foil, to give up sich an a chance; I’d hev held to t’ book.’

‘It would have been Armley then, for Mr. Barnard is not a man to play with. He made Hedgeway tremble, I can tell you.’

‘Wodn’t he accept ov terms, and be content wi’ hoife.’

‘All or none,’ was the only reply.

‘What about those thou sell’d?’

‘I told him they were printer’s bonus, made up from stray sheets.’

‘We’al?’

‘He agreed to pass them over, on condition I yielded up every copy of the work to Ward, curse him.’

'Hi! he deserves cursing for not lening a poor mon like thee mak a living, bud t'lawyers are a bad lot, allus prying i'to iverry bodies' pie.'

'Cuthbert and Barnard are noted ferreters.'

'They ferret toa mich for my fancy, and that Hedgeway is a real corf-heard, allus flourishing a ruler and screeking out "t'Law," when he knows nowt abawt it.'

'I can still make a trifle by "Castle Rushon," Maudie.

'How?' she eagerly questioned.

'The reserves.'

'Hast managed to keep some back?'

'Yes.'

'Where has t' them?'

'In different towns.'

'Are they bound up?'

'No.'

'How can ta get them done lad?'

'Squirrel has the plate, and will prepare covers as required.'

'Thou mun keep on printing.'

'I dare not.'

'Why?'

'The penalty would be heavy, unless Ward consented.'

'Praya what hez that chap toa do wi' our business?'

'The copyright is his.'

'Thou promist to sware it were thine.'

'I meant to do so, but Barnard fixed his big eyes on me, and thundered out, "be cautious, Pawkins, my client holds manuscript."'

'What a fuss abawt a bit ov mucky paper,' she cried, with infinite scorn.

'Mucky or clean, lass, it has foiled me.'

'What a shame.'

'Yes! it is, but Mr. Barnard argued in this way, "that a book is an Author's estate, and to trespass on it is like building a house on another man's land.'

'What balderdash that foil talks.'

'Still it is law.'

'Break t'law then.'

'That would bring trouble on you and the children: I must travel, and sell cheap to those who ask no questions.'

'Mebby they winnut buy.'

'I know pretty fairly where to go.'

'Thou mun bid em not blab.'

'No fear, we shall deal confidentially.'

'Thou'll loss a lot ov brass.'

'I can afford to do so, I got them for a cipher.'

'That's true,' she said, with evident satisfaction, 'when wilt ta begin hawking?'

'The day Glen and Co. publish.'

'I reacon thou'll be t'main publisher?'

'Hush! Maud; remember only a few copies have been sold to friends.'

'Don't be flaid, there are no listeners i' this hoose.'

'Walls have sometimes ears. Hark! is that a news boy?'

'Hi!'

Pawkins rushed to the door and returned with a paper in his hand. 'I must be off instantly,' he cried, "Castle Rushon" is advertised.'

'Hev summut to eat first.'

'Be quick then; time is precious.'

Maud peppered a nicely cooked chop and remarked, 'Stock t' markets, Cain, for thear's nowt beats gold.'

While Pawkins and his wife conversed Grace Ward stood before a table covered with elegantly bound books. 'I wonder, Robert, how long we must wait for the first review,' she exclaimed, with a smile of infinite satisfaction.

'They will all appear in due course.'

'What will the London critics say, do you think?'

'Cut me up dreadfully,' I expect. The postman's quick knock made him pause abruptly; Madge entered almost in-

stantly, and presented a newspaper to her master. '*The Firefly*,' he gasped; 'take it Grace, for words and syllables are nothing but a jumble to me.'

She took the paper eagerly, and read with glowing cheeks, a brilliant notice of "Castle Rushon."

'*The Firefly* is generous to my fledgling. I will mount now, without fear.'

'That is right, look upward and onward; but why are you packing those four copies with so much care.'

'They are going by post to some friends. Holt and Winlow are dreadfully anxious.'

'You think so.'

'Really, Grace, you are too bad. Holt, you know, wrote a poem for "Castle Rushon."'

'Did you use it?'

'No.'

'Why?'

'It was unsuitable.'

'I wish you had refused it at once.'

'Holt is a good fellow, but always dabbling with pen and ink.'

'The omission will be a sting.'

'A sting! why I would not hurt his feelings for the world.'

'You have been thoughtless; he may become a bitter foe.'

'Nonsense, Holt has really no talent.'

'That will probably cause him to take offence more quickly.'

'Oh, he is not an idiot, and will undersand in a minute.'

'Who is this volume for?'

'Tom Ronald.'

'The Scotch boy?'

'Yes.'

'Why send him one?'

'Selfishness.'

'I do not comprehend.'

'I wish to receive a truthful criticism hot from the oven.'

'Tom could not possibly review a book. I consider him half crazed.'

'Half crazed ! indeed. I wager no London critic can handle "Castle Rushon" like him.'

'Have you a copy to spare for Holly Bank ?'

'Certainly.'

'Days rolled on, and literary guns remained silent ; Robert quaked at the sight of *The Times* and *Court Journal* ; at last a pile of Magazines came to hand, and all proclaimed "Castle Rushon" a work of originality and power.'

'Are you satisfied now, Grace,' he cried, triumphantly.

'Yes, Rob, but see this wee hamper has just been left for you, and I am dying with curiosity to know what it contains.'

'Is any answer required ?'

'No, the boy said he had not to wait.'

'There will be a note inside ;' but a white napkin and a small china dish were its contents.

'What a queer present for a gentleman,' laughed Grace ; 'shall I fetch a knife ?'

'Please, then we will test the china dish ?'

A portion of the delicious crust was removed ; then she flushed with indignation. 'Never mind, Queen,' her brother said, hastily, 'remember the old ballad,

"Sing a song for sixpence,
Half a peck of rye ;
Four and twenty blackbirds,
Baked in a pie."

'That is no fun,' she sobbed hysterically, pointing to the dish, which simply contained, 'A goose head.'

'Still that emblem of human malice is worth untold gold to me,' said Ward whistling merrily.

'Why ?'

'It proves "Castle Rushon" is moving men.'

'For good or bad, but you do not appear afraid of enmity.'

'I court it, for stagnant water is much worse than a running stream, let jealousy have its way ; I have made my mark, and intend to mount the literary ladder.'

His words were not idle ones, for splendid reviews and private criticisms poured in every day. 'Go on and prosper,' was the decree of the multitude ; 'crush and destroy,' the cry of a few who, toad-like, croaked in darkness, and hid their heads from the light of day.

'You are a lucky fellow Ward,' Mr. Mawson said one evening, as he leisurely stirred his tea.

'How so?'

'Your book is going off well ; better be getting a second edition ready.'

'Is another likely to be wanted?'

'Of course, the sale is immense ; there was a regular run for them in Bradford this morning, and a hundred sold at Londsmede yesterday.'

'I have not reaped much pecuniary benefit yet ; I presume that will come by and by.'

'No doubt, fortunes are not made in a day.'

'Nor a year,' interposed Grace. 'I tell Robert if "Castle Rushon" covers expenses he ought to be thankful.'

'You mean present edition. A reprint will be more profitable.'

'I shall sell copyright, out-and-out,' remarked Ward thoughtfully.

'That will secure a much wider circulation.' Just at this moment the door opened, and Joe Osborn entered. Grace was very gracious, and made room for him on the ottoman. 'Where have you been all this while?' she questioned.

'Enjoying the gaities of Paris, and making myself extremely comfortable at the Clifton hotel.'

'Upon my life, Joe ; but you know how to take things easy,' said Mawson. 'Have you returned for Burton's marriage?'

'Yes,' he replied, lazily ; then turning to Grace, asked

‘Will you go up to the Friends’ Meeting-house with me in the morning, Miss Ward?’

‘I should like to, very much, for it will be different to our regular tread-mill affairs.’

‘Thanks, I will call for you at 10 a.m.’

Joe was punctual next morning, and Grace was astonished to see Dora, bright as a May Queen, step gaily from the carriage. ‘I did not tell you last evening, Miss Ward, that my romping niece had arrived,’ Osborn said in explanation, lest the intelligence should upset your nerves.

‘No fear of that;’ then she impulsively cried, ‘Dora, my darling, how beautiful you have grown.’

‘Dandy says the same, but I will soon cure him of such silliness when we are married.’

‘When is that to be?’

‘Immediately after ordination. Papa says he must take orders first.’

‘Wilton has received promise of a good living; but they are to travel before settling down,’ interposed Joe.

‘I intend to be a model parson’s wife; and have learnt to make soups and gruel already.’

‘Follow my advice, checksey,’ her uncle said, gravely; ‘and don’t interfere too much in poor cottages.’

‘You mean do not pry.’

‘Just so, and now we really must start.’

‘What an abominable shame to drive this lovely morning; please send the carriage back, and let us walk.’

‘Which do you prefer, Miss Ward?’

‘To walk.’

‘Then we will do so.’

A quarter of an hour took them to the Friends’ Meeting House, which looked so neat and quiet that Joe instantly named it ‘The Temple of Peace.’ The interior proved equally inviting; they stood at the door for a moment rather perplexed about seats: presently a man came up to them and said to Osborn,

'Shall I find a place for thee and thy friends?'

'Thank you very much,' Joe answered courteously.

'I want to be close to the wedding party,' interposed Dora.

'And thou shalt be,' was the smiling response.

Sweet looking ladies and young folks came quickly in : the latter were rather refractory, and appropriated the best seats for themselves. Grace noticed with pleasure the patient politeness of the attendant, until a troop of school girls went and filled up some evidently reserved seats. 'I wish to keep a few forms for our own Friends,' was the placid remonstrance, but it acted like a charm. They rose at once and made room for some gentle Quakeresses, in dove-coloured silk ; the clock pointed to the half hour, and expectation reached its climax.

'I wish they would come,' said Dora.

'Hush,' whispered Joe.

A side door opened, and the bridegroom's parents came in : a suppressed murmur of pleasure greeted Mrs. Burton. The young bride looked perfectly lovely in her robe of white satin and lace. When all were seated a profound silence ensued ; then a gentleman stood up and addressed the assembly. His words were few, but powerful. Prayer followed, then came another 'still.' After this the bridegroom rose, and took the bride by the hand, saying 'I promise, by Divine help, to be to thee a loving and faithful husband while life lasts.' She also made the same vow to him, and thus their covenant was sealed. A paper was next read and signed, then a lady interceded for the young birds about to fly from their parents' nest.

'Now what do you think of a Friends' wedding?' said Joe, noticing the girls' silence.

'It reminded me of Bethany,' replied Grace.

'Or a peep into Paradise,' remarked Dora.

'Burton ought to be happy this morning, little niece.'

'Why don't you get a wife, and be happy yourself?' she retorted.

'I intend to do so ; but see, here we are at home.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

A FLASH.

TWELVE months after the publication of "Castle Rushon," the 7-30 a.m. express from Lexton to Selport was sending forth its last whistle, when Pawkins rushed down the platform and leaped into a carriage. Business seemed evidently to have prospered, for he had the appearance of a very warm man; and, like King David's bay tree, spread himself in great power. 'Guard, shall we stop at Huddersfield?' he questioned.

'Yes, sir,' then the door was slammed to.

The train puffed away, and Cain commenced to arrange some parcels. 'How lucky,' he murmured, 'that there is no one else in here, for the sight of Ward has quite upset me.' Heavy drops of sweat gathered on his brow, and unsightly figures danced before his eyes, making the villain shiver with uncontrollable dread: he sat still for awhile, then took out a small account book and commenced to calculate. 'It is paying well but the risk is great, for I am not altogether sure about Brookman and this last 500 copies, Glen and Co. are apparently getting suspicious, such brilliant reviews they say ought to have commanded a larger circulation, but Maudie and her little ones are first with me, and sixty per cent. below published price has gained the markets; still, it is hard to deal on the sly, and if I succeed to-day Ward may glean what he can: thank goodness, my harvest has been a golden one. He looked up; the clouds were dark, and a dense mist hung like a funeral pall over the hills. 'Going to be a storm,' he exclaimed, in dismay, 'and if thunder comes my business will be delayed.' Onward flew the express, and onward came the hurricane; at last the iron horse stopped, and Cain jumped hastily out.

'Want a cab, sir?' said a bright-looking boy.

'No, my lad; I never waste money.'

'But it is pouring with rain, governor; you had better let me call one.'

'I am going to West's Hotel.' 'How far is it from here?' he questioned.

'Nearly a mile, and cabby will charge a shilling; if you like, I'll carry your bag for sixpence.'

'Say threepence.'

'Couldn't, unless you'll stand treat for cocoa and roast potatoes.'

'Are you hungry?' he asked, in a softer voice.

'Very, sir.'

'Here take my bag, and I will give you sixpence and a good feed.'

'God bless you, master,' the boy replied, gratefully.

That blessing sounded sweet to Cain, and that one act of mercy proved his heart, though hardened by avarice, was yet human. 'Record that deed ye ministering angels, and bear it up to the Great White Throne; then at the judgment day, when accounts are rendered, and souls weighed, Charity will spread out her mantle,' and cry 'I cover a multitude of sins.'

The little fellow eat a good dinner, and went away singing merrily, but Cain sat for a long time silent. 'I must tell Ford these books are bankrupt stock,' he muttered, 'and that I took them in security for money lent; but there cannot be any risk, with a fifteen-years' character, and first-rate church testimonials.' A peal of thunder rolled overhead, and the room shook with its vibration. Pawkins leaped up, and crossed to the window: a black, dirty river, ran beneath. 'What a miserable day,' he cried impulsively.

A young woman entered at the moment, carrying a tray, 'Selport, sir, is always dreary when it rains,' she said.

'Don't trouble to lay the table, my time is up,' he replied *crossly*.

'You have ordered dinner.'

'And I will pay for it. How much?'

'Three shillings, please.'

He then threw the money down, took up his hat, and lingered a moment at the door. A terrific flash of lightning made him impulsively put his hand on the iron balustrade, immediately afterwards a thunder-bolt descended, his garments were ripped from the collar of his coat to his heels, and his boots torn from his feet, leaving him a blackened corpse beside the shattered railings; forked tongues of fire played around, and shrieks of anguish, mingled with the roar of heaven's artillery, for the electric fluid had clove the building. Materials fed the flames like magic, and the firemen's helmets glowed as in a furnace; but every effort failed to extinguish the conflagration, and night's darkness fell on a dismal ruin.

Another day dawned, and through the door of the Ward's breakfast room came the sound of music and laughter. Madge presently entered and handed her master *The Mercury*. 'Thunderstorm, loss of life at Selport,' he murmured; then almost instantly exclaimed, 'Grace! Pawkins is killed.'

'God have mercy on him,' she said earnestly.

'Amen,' replied her brother.

'Have you heard anything of Barnton?'

'No, he is still wanted.'

'Whither do you think he has fled?'

'To Dixey's land. Is your letter from Westmoreland?'

'Yes, an invitation to Dora's wedding. Can you spare me?'

'Certainly.'

'What will you do while I am away, Rob?'

'Go a fishing.'

'Where?'

'A little beyond Ilkley.'

'Capital, you will find plenty of characters to study also.'

'Originals are scarce, we may come across one now and then, but they are like sovereigns in an author's purse, hard to find.'

‘What are you laughing at Ward?’ asked Joe Osborn, who had just come in.

‘Yorkshire oddities.’

‘I have received a telegram from my sister, Miss Ward, so please excuse this early visit.’

‘No one ill, I trust.’

‘Oh dear no, but I am wanted about these marriage settlements, and have to leave at 12-15.’

‘So soon.’

‘Yes, and Mrs. Singleton is anxious for you to accompany me, if possible.’

‘She can’t get ready in time,’ Robert said decidedly.

‘Why not?’

‘Stupid man, did you ever know a woman who could pack in three hours?’

‘Two will be quite sufficient for me,’ Grace said quietly.

‘Thanks, I will call for you at twelve; and if you require a good Yorkshire specimen Ward, study Zack Crab.’

‘I will, he is a fine truthful chap, home-spun to the backbone.’

‘I can compare my old friend,’ said Osborn, ‘to nothing but a grand oak tree standing alone, looking down with contemptuous scorn, at the army of mushrooms springing up around.’

‘One day lately, I asked his opinion on the educational question,’ Robert answered with a laugh.

‘What did Zack say?’

‘He contended that it was good for a working man’s child to know how to read and write, but not honest to teach it out of granny’s petticoats.’

‘I presume that was a rub at the misappropriation of doles and charities.’

‘It would be good fun to introduce Dont Lister to him,’ interposed Grace.

‘They would get too warm over politics and XX beer,’ rejoined Ward.

'Have you seen Mrs. Hardcastle lately?'

'I called last week, Mr. Osborn, she appeared extremely feeble; but Sally and her children are well.'

'Poor thing, did her baby live!'

'Oh yes, he is a jolly wee fellow, who has smiled, tumbled, and grown strong.'

'Well, I must be off, will you please be punctual.'

'I am never late,' she replied rather stiffly.

The journey to Kendal was enjoyable, and that evening, Grace had a long chat with Nettie.'

'Do you think Miss Ward, that Harry meant to treat me with contempt?' the girl asked with a low sob.

'No darling, I am convinced that there is some grave misunderstanding, you must trust in God, and wait patiently.'

Next morning Grace was up at daybreak, her dreams had been haunted by Nettie's tearful face, and Harry's white determined one; 'this hot bed of treachery shall be fathomed,' she murmured, 'help will be required and Mrs. Larkings must give it:' so after breakfast she expressed a wish to go to Kent View.

Mrs. Singleton opened her large blue eyes with astonishment. 'I thought you and my cousin did not agree?' she exclaimed.

'Time softens everything, and I have not seen Mrs. Larkings, since her bereavement.'

'The pony carriage is quite at your disposal, but I have an engagement, and cannot go this morning.'

'Have you any message?'

'Yes tell Esther she must not buy young Graham's horse for Russell, or he will certainly break his neck.'

Grace had a delicious drive and received a gracious reception. 'Very glad to see you Miss Ward, but I am still my own bailiff and the adding up of pounds, shillings, and pence, cannot possibly be postponed.'

The table was covered with paper, and account books, 'so Grace said pleasantly I see my visit is rather inopportune.'

'Not at all. What a charming day.'

There was a dead pause for a moment, then Miss Ward dashed into her subject by saying, 'I want some help Mrs. Larkings, will you give it?'

'That will depend on the object.'

Grace flushed, and hesitated.

'Speak freely dear, I have never yet betrayed a secret.'

'I am anxious about Nettie.'

'Why?'

'Sorrow is breaking her heart.'

'Absurd!' she cried and leaned back in her chair rigid as a statue.

'Harry Henderson,' Grace commenced.

'Pray hush! that youth has been dead to me for some time.'

'Not to your god-daughter.'

'Then he ought to be.'

'You must really hear what I have to say Mrs. Larkings, remember your promise at the Baptismal font.'

'I have done my duty thoroughly.'

'Granted, but I am determined by God's help to lift this cross from Nettie, and claim your assistance.'

'The child is well rid of the scoundrel.'

'Suppose he is innocent.'

'Impossible!'

'There is some bye-play, that is certain.'

'Esther's proud lips curled: Indian heiresses are very fascinating, and butler's opinion on some points admirable. Have you read *Hudibras*?

'No.'

'Well the man decidedly knew what he was about; while writing

"What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year."

'I cannot think him mercenary, beside Nettie has money.'

'Harry is well born, and will ultimately come in for a title; but then he has grieved Sir James, so it may prove an empty one.'

'You therefore consider Miss Singleton has been cast off for a richer lady?'

'I do.'

'Can you bring forward one instance, on which to build so harsh a judgment.'

'No he was always generous, sharing his last halfpenny with his school-fellows; but he may have contracted heavy debts, and find them hard task masters.'

'I do not believe it, please try and help me to clear up the mystery.'

'Will you, dear, leave the matter entirely to me? Then I will undertake to carry it through.'

'Most gladly.'

'Come now and look at my wedding present for Dora, then drive with me to Stavely.'

Mrs. Larkings wrote that evening to Henderson, for she was not one to stand shivering on the brink, when a plunge seemed necessary, and apparently stamped, and sealed her letter with infinite satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TEA KETTLE.

'NETTIE,' cried Russell, 'Mrs. Robinson has come, and brought a wedding present from Dont Lister.'

'What is it?'

'I don't know, aunt says we are not to look just now.'

'Where is Ann?'

'Here, Miss.'

'I am so glad to see you. Have you had a pleasant journey?'

'Yes, I spent last evening with Cressey Hardcastle, she sent her respects to you and Miss Dora.'

‘ I should like to see her again ; uncle wishes me to return with him, but papa says, “ No.” ’

‘ Hark ! ’ there goes the dinner gong, I must be off to the housekeeper’s room.’

A foot passed along the corridor, ‘ mamma is that you ? ’ called Nettie.

‘ Yes love.’

‘ Has father returned from Burnside ? ’

‘ Long since, are you ready to go down ? ’

‘ Almost. Will you please fasten this bracelet ? ’

Lister’s present afforded much speculation during dinner, and immediately Mrs. Singleton rose, the young folks trooped off on a voyage of discovery.

‘ Shall we follow them Gilbert ? ’ said Joe.

‘ Certainly, I fancy we all feel a wee bit curious.’

‘ Come along then, the ladies will doubtless admit us.’

The housekeeper’s room was remarkably cozy, and on the table stood Dont’s parcel.

‘ Wilton undo the wrapper,’ said Mrs. Singleton.

He did so ; then held up an immense copper kettle filled tea and sugar.

‘ Well done Lister,’ Joe exclaimed. ‘ Have you a message Ann ? ’

‘ Father said Miss Dora was to make her master a cup of tea, the first day she got into her own house.’

Dora laughed, and whispered to her mother, ‘ imagine calling Dandy my master.’

‘ I thought he had a contempt for tea,’ said Nettie.

‘ A cup is quite a comfort to him now, Miss.’

‘ Your father will be at church in the morning Mary.’ Mr. Singleton remarked later on, ‘ Old Peter was just finishing the decorations when I came away : one motto environed with rosemary bears the inscription, “ Luck to the Osborns, and Wiltons.” ’

‘ Rosemary ? ’ she questioned with surprise.

‘ Don’t you know the tradition ? “ If Rosemary flourish in the garden, the lady rules the house.” ’

'Still it is a funeral plant.'

'Nonsense.'

Mrs. Singleton softly repeated.

"Come, press my lips and lie with me,
Beneath the lonely Alder tree."

Just at the moment, a party of school children passed through the park laden with wild flowers, and Russell scampered in crying 'Aunt, our people are going mad over Dora, and are making their cottages quite smart.'

'With polyanthuses and daffodils,' sneered Agnes.

'No indeed,' he replied hotly.

'Pardon my ignorance, but I was under the impression that poor folks liked gaudy colours.'

'What are you saying about poor folks?' questioned Mr. Wallace.

'That they have a taste for gaudy colours.'

'Not all, Miss Chester,' said Mr. Hazlehurst.

'Halloo! Doctor where have you dropt from?'

'Not from the clouds, Rector, or I should have broken my neck.'

'I'm delighted to see you. Mrs. Singleton has kept your visit as a pleasant surprise.'

'Thanks,' then turning to Agnes he said, 'May I ask what you ladies would do without silk and woollen weavers?'

'And we boys without blacksmiths to shoe our ponies?' cried Russell.

'That would be a dreadful misfortune,' she retorted contemptuously.

'You live, my love, in a crowded town, and are therefore unacquainted with our agricultural labourers,' Mrs. Singleton remarked, gently.

'I have travelled much, but certainly never mingled with the masses.'

'Then your knowledge of them must be superficial.'

'The word of an English workman used to be his bond,' said William.

'And is yet, the Doctor rejoined. Of course there is a great difference between our Leeds mechanics and your farm labourers.'

The Rector smiled, and passed his tea-cup to be refilled.

'You remind me, Doctor, of a painful circumstance which took place last winter,' said Joe.

'What was it?' he asked.

'A Lady east-ended.'

'East-ended, I do not understand,' interposed Nettie.

'It is after the manner of Irish Boycotting, but even more cowardly. Roughts hired to annoy their victim.'

'They ought to be rope-ended,' Russell exclaimed, who, boy-like, was large in nautical slang.

'Do you know the lady?' Dora inquired.

'Yes, very well, she resides close to me, and is on Dr. Talmage's editorial staff. One evening, during November, Miss Rodney was sat writing; a sudden uproar caused her to draw aside the window curtains: a repulsive looking woman was standing on the garden wall hurling epithets of abuse, that a vile tongue alone could utter. My friend at first thought the poor creature was a lunatic, but other voices soon joined in, and the street lamp plainly showed a crowd of angry faces. The police were immediately sent for, but from that night a systematic plan of annoyance was kept up: two persons were recognized and heavily fined. Miss Rodney was taken ill a few days afterwards, and the blackguards found out that her doctor considered perfect quietude necessary for her recovery; they therefore hunted up, and bribed organ grinders, and street musicians of every description, bringing them in front of her residence with diabolical laughter and applause.'

'How dared they?' interposed Mrs. Singleton, indignantly.
- 'The word dare is without meaning to such miscreants, until magistrates interfere; and this lawless band for weeks

actually carried out, in spite of the vigilance of the police, every conceivable plan to intensify suffering, and cause death, if possible.'

'Is Miss Rodney better, uncle?'

'Yes, Nettie, I saw her quite recently, and she told me the Shepstone police had been first-rate doctors.'

'They are brave men, but poorly appreciated,' said Mr. Hazlehurst.

'What a tumult there would be in England if "The Force" were dissolved for one month,' Mr. Singleton remarked.

'Leeds roughs know how to brew up a riot at any rate,' Joe said, with a laugh. 'They are also well initiated in writing anonymous letters, and circulating malicious reports.'

'Are such people able to write?' questioned Mrs. Larkings.

'Yes, but their phraseology betrays them. One man who lives in our immediate neighbourhood actually stated Miss Rodney "to be mad." A note of caution was sent to him saying, legal proceedings would be instituted if the offence was repeated. What do you think the ignoramus did?'

'Answer through a newspaper,' cried Dora.

'The fellow would scarcely be qualified for that,' said Mr. Singleton, dryly.

'Certainly not, but he posted the letter on the wall of his house.'

'What a horrid man. Is he connected with the roughs?' asked Agnes.

'Suspected to be paymaster for a superior.'

'What a simpleton,' exclaimed Dr. Hazlehurst, 'to put a thing up to his own shame.'

'Just what I say. Miss Rodney, however, acted wisely, and sent a copy of the letter to the police authorities.'

'Has any clue been obtained as to who bribed the barbarians?' Mr. Wallace enquired.

'Yes, Rector, Miss Rodney's influence some years ago lost a certain Society forty-thousand pounds, and from that

time their vengeance has never slumbered; but alcohol is likely to bring things to a climax, for one of its devotees let a name slip, and boasted audaciously that she was well paid to do this dastardly work.'

'Advise Miss Rodney to put everything into the hands of her solicitor, Joe.'

'Thanks, Gilbert, but magistrates and police are the men for this case. Doubtless they will soon discover and punish the offenders.'

'Let us hope they will imitate the old Castilians,' exclaimed William, and

"Curse them devoutly,
Hammer them stoutly."

'I object to cursing but not hammering,' said the Rector quietly.

'They deserve both,' cried Russell, 'and I will say Amen heartily, to every one of your petitions next Ash-Wednesday.'

'Hush, my boy,' his aunt said, softly.

'Papa, how sweetly the church bells are chiming,' interposed Dora.

'The ringers are practising for to-morrow. Throw up the window, child, and let the melody in.'

'What a powerful influence bells have in every country,' remarked Dr. Hazlehurst. 'The Mahometans hold a pretty belief that musical bells hang on the trees of Paradise, and are put in motion by a wind from the throne of God.'

It was late when the guests dispersed. Some remained all night; others, who lived within a reasonable distance, returned home, promising to meet again for breakfast. The marriage was very quiet, still Dora's dark eyes shone proudly through the folds of her rich veil when Wilton advanced to her side. Eight maids in white, with bouquets of violets, accompanied the bride, and just as Dandy slipped on the ring, a ray of sunshine stole through the window, and rested on her head like a benediction. Nettie tried to rejoice with her sister, but found she could not forget Harry. Every-

thing recalled her vows, and the solemn stillness was suddenly broken by a bitter sob. Mr. Singleton glanced towards her, and was therefore pleasantly surprised to hear her wishing Dora joy in her usual voice at the conclusion of the service. Then friends and relatives pressed round, offering warm congratulations, and a confused murmur of cheerful chit-chat was kept up until they re-entered Holly Bank. At eleven the bridal party started for Dover, *en route* to Greece, and the day's festivities closed with a ball.

'Mary, how much did Dora's diamonds cost?' Mrs. Larking's asked, abruptly.

'They are family jewels, and were Wilton's gift.'

'We shall have a storm, the air is quite oppressive. Surely James wont sail to night?'

'I hope not.'

'No relying on March hares. I quite count on a catastrophe.'

'Then you will not be astonished if they come to grief,' Miss Chester said, scornfully.

'Not at all. Why have they chosen such an outlandish place?'

'Byron calls it "the land of the unforgotten brave,"' she replied.

'What rubbish; a sorry picture they would make, captured by brigands.'

'I do not apprehend that,' Mrs. Singleton responded. Then tapping Agnes playfully with her fan, said 'Mr. Herbert is seeking you for the next quadrille.'

'Is that Joe dancing with Miss Ward?' Mrs. Larkings enquired.

'Yes.'

'He seems to pay her a great deal of attention. I don't like it, Mary.'

'My brother engaged himself to her sometime ago.'

'Is that possible?'

'Certainly.'

'She has no money, at least none worth mentioning.'

'Joe does not care for that, and Gilbert is delighted with the match.'

'I dare say. Was Joe ever in love before?'

'I believe not.'

'Who are you talking about?' Mr. Singleton asked, handing a pretty young lady a chair.

Mrs. Larkings gave a little shrug, for William came up at the moment. Their eyes met in one long, earnest gaze, and memory rolled back over a sea of years.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SUMMUT.

WILLIAM left the ball-room early and returned home, with many tender recollections aroused. 'Oh! Esther,' he kept softly repeating, 'it was I who turned your trusting heart to stone.' He rose next morning at the sound of the first dressing-bell, and on the staircase met Mr. Osborn.

'I am going to Kent View, have you any message?'

There was something in the voice that made his father smile with infinite satisfaction as he answered, 'No, but God speed you my son.'

Mrs. Larkings was sat sewing in the quaint oak-panelled parlour when the footman announced 'Mr. William Osborn.' She rose, and greeted him with a bright smile. 'Pray allow me to congratulate you on your wedding speech,' she said, smoothly.

'You have no idea how bad it sounded to myself,' he replied.

'Oh! it was capital,' she responded, enthusiastically.

'Thanks, what a charming day. I am going to be superstitious, Esther, and take it for a good omen.'

'I am never superstitious,' she answered dryly.

William smiled slightly, and twirled his eyeglass. 'I want to tell you,' he said at last, 'how my life has been blighted by remorse. I have done everything to escape from myself, but the poison of thought has laughed me to scorn.'

'Forgive yourself,' she replied gently. 'I grant you mine if that will do any good.'

'Can you really pardon me?' he cried incredulously.

'Yes, but don't recall the wretched past, for I do not think any man ever treated a woman more cruelly than you did me.'

He put out his hand and touched her soft hair caressingly. What sorcery lurks in a woman's hair,—twining, clinging, weak yet strong. 'Esther,' he whispered, 'do you still care for me?'

'Yes, William;' then she pushed him quickly away, for the door opened and the stately figure of Mr. Wallace entered.

'Mary,' cried Mr. Singleton that afternoon, 'What do you think? William and Esther are going to make a match after all.'

'How have you got to know?'

'I met your father in Kendal. He told me, and seemed greatly pleased.'

'I daresay, the estates will join together nicely.'

'You little worldling. What will Russell say?'

'The boy informed me sometime since that it was going to be "a case," and graciously promised his consent.'

'Sharp lad, he will make a fine lawyer.'

'I heard him telling Nettie this morning, he would be nothing but a hunting Squire.'

Mr. Singleton laughed merrily; then said, 'Am I to consent to let her go back with Joe.'

'She seems to wish it, and Grace I know will take every care of her.'

'We go ourselves in autumn, Nettie had better wait till then.'

'I think differently,' Mrs. Singleton replied.

'My love, remember her cough. I am convinced she will be safer under your own eye.'

'Leeds does not affect that in the least. We shall have to take her on the continent for winter.'

'I have business in London to-morrow, which may detain me some days. I suppose there will be no Nettie, or any one else, watching for my return.'

'I think you are mistaken,' she answered, while her eyes filled with tears.

'You had better take the horses out to-day, my dear, I believe grandpapa is expecting you.'

This, of course, was unanswerable; so she commenced to dress, with a brow less placid than usual.

In the meanwhile Nettie went forward, preparing for her visit, after wringing a reluctant permission from her father. She expected to enjoy herself, for there is always to the young a sort of romance in going away. Mrs. Singleton chose a quantity of pretty new dresses, and speculated as to who might cross her daughter's path whilst wearing them.

'Coming events do not always cast their shadows before them,' thought Nettie, as she sat on the floor half buried in the contents of a great drawing portfolio, selecting materials to take with her to her uncle's. 'I wish men were not such monsters,' she exclaimed, with sudden impatience.

'Miss Singleton.'

'Oh! Doctor Hazlehurst,' she cried, jumping up, 'where have you sprung from?'

'Carlisle, and I must start for home in a few minutes. Is your mother in?'

'No, can't you wait a little?'

'I am afraid not, this telegram is urgent.'

'How will you get to Kendal, the horses are all out?'

'The Rector has kindly promised to drive in with me.'

'I hope to see you again soon.'

'Then you are coming to Leeds after all?'

'Yes, and I shall bring my dog with me.'

The Doctor laughed, and ran up stairs to order his valet to pack at once.

It was a splendid day when Joe and Nettie started for Yorkshire; great fleecy clouds floated across the deep blue sky, and rays of sunshine gilded the purple moorland. 'Look, uncle, at those sportsmen,' she exclaimed.

'They are well grouped,' he replied, 'and certainly add to the picturesqueness of the scene.'

'Don't you think that man looks better in grey, than the one in brown velvet?'

'Perhaps, but here we are at Skipton. Will you have refreshment?'

'No, thanks.'

'Miss Clifford is residing in Leeds at present. Do you like her pussy?'

'Very much, she is clever and well educated.'

'You consider yourself a competent judge?'

'Don't you?' was on her lips, but she only smiled and hung her head consciously.

The train stopped, and closed their *tete-a-tete*. Nettie sprang off her seat and commenced to chatter fast, and freely, while collecting books, papers, and miscellaneous litter, the inevitable consequence of a long railway journey.

When they got home the cool drawing-room appeared, and felt pleasant after the heat and dust of the train.

'Will you have dinner at once, sir?' Edward enquired.

'Yes,' he replied, and then addressed a few kind words to the other servants.

'I think I will go, uncle, and see Miss Clifford,' Nettie said next morning, as they sat at breakfast.

'All right, will you walk down with me?'

'I should like to.'

'Come along then, there is a nice breeze from the south.'

Their walk was a long one, so Joe said in Briggate 'shall I call a cab?'

'Please, for it is very hot and I am rather tired.'

He had scarcely done so when Robinson came up. 'It does me gud to see yer bonnie face, Miss Singleton,' he exclaimed. 'Ann flaid aar folks wen sho got hoome wi' saying ye were falling off on it.'

'I am better again. How are all my Pudsey friends?'

'Uncommon weel, mother will be rare and chuff to hear yuh have coomed over'd. It is Jubilee Sunday on t' 21st, will ye drive in for t' forenoon service?'

'Certainly,' Joe responded with evident pleasure.

'Say if God be willing, for nowt can be done wi'out His permission, Mr. Osborn.'

'Quite correct, Isaac,' he replied, handing Nettie into the cab.

'Yuh are fearful careless, sir, bud none wi'out religious feeling. I will pray till t' Lord sets yur soul at liberty.'

'Thanks; good morning,' Joe said gravely.

'We shall have a nice visit, uncle, if the day be fine.'

'I hope so, and it will be a real pleasure to see old Dont.'

'This is Miss Clifford's; will you call with me?'

'No, love; I have an engagement at 10.30, so can only leave a card.'

'Will you fetch me?'

'At what time?'

'Three, if convenient.'

'I will make it,' he answered, ringing the bell.

A pretty young servant opened the door. 'Is Miss Clifford in, Sarah?'

'Yes, Miss Singleton; but she is poorly at present.'

'Can I see her?'

'I think so; come in, please, while I ask.' She returned almost instantly, and said 'Miss Ethel will be delighted to receive you, ma'am.'

Nettie found her friend feeding a pet canary. 'I am sorry you are ill, Ethel; are you suffering much just now?'

‘Intensely ; but pain is lightened by hope.’

‘What hope?’

‘My Lord’s return.’

Nettie’s eyes flashed, and her cheeks glowed. ‘Do you understand ; can you help me to realize it?’ she exclaimed, eagerly. ‘I thirst for knowledge, but like a child in the dark can only put out my hand and cry for aid.’

‘I can point, but the Holy Spirit alone can teach a hope that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith.’

‘No sorrow!’ Nettie repeated slowly.

‘None ; the thought of His re-appearing is a panacea for pain. In the lonely night hours I lie and watch, yearning to hear that divine benediction again spoken. “Peace be unto you.” If the poet Fergusson had believed in this blessed hope, those words “I will come on thee as a thief,” would have had no power to torture his mind, or extinguish his genius in a madhouse.’

‘Poor man, perhaps his conscience condemned him.’

‘Very likely. Did I ever tell you that a verse of Scripture was the means of my conversion?’

‘No, I thought you had always followed Jesus.’

‘So I did until my father died, then a strong rebellious spirit manifested itself, and for many years I could not say “Thy will be done,” for my earthly idol was taken and my heart became as stone. I prayed, fasted, and kept every vigil appointed by our church, hoping thus to work out my own salvation. God at last sent suffering ; I bowed my head, but rebelled in my heart, for oh ! it was a dreadful penance, to lie still and helpless. Mr. Hazlehurst you know is my doctor, and I often felt afraid that he would detect a want of submission was the root of my disease. One morning I became convinced that this fear was not groundless, for he said abruptly, “I was at Holy Trinity last evening, Miss Clifford, and the text struck me as peculiar.” “What was it?” I naturally enquired. He paused for a moment, then repeated “Oh, that one would hear me ! be-

hold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that my adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me." I do not remember the chapter, or verse, but they are in Job: he cast a quick glance, and added "You will find that book a useful study." I sought for the words, and from then endeavoured to imitate the sublime submission of the Patriarch.'

A light foot sounded on the stairs, and a cheery voice said, 'May I come in.'

'Good morning Mr. Hazlehurst, I'm glad to see you.'

'I did not expect to find you here, Miss Singleton,' he exclaimed with evident surprise, then turning to Ethel remarked 'I have just popped in to tell you not to be alarmed if a report reaches here, that I was killed this morning.'

'Killed,' they cried.

'Yes, my horses took fright close to the railway bridge, and the carriage is broken to pieces.'

'You are not hurt, I trust?' Ethel asked eagerly.

'Not in the least, or my man either,' he replied, taking up his hat.

'Don't go yet, tell us all about it,' Nettie said, coaxingly.

'I cannot, for a number of other patients are yet to see.'

'How kind Mr. Hazlehurst is, Ethel, to think thus of other people after sustaining such a shock himself.'

'It is just his daily life. I heard quite lately of a poor lad, named Ben Kirk, who was dying in deplorable ignorance. A clergyman was called in; he prayed, but hesitated to administer the Sacrament until proper instructions were given, still Ben kept pleading, "Surely I sud doa a summut, or a summut sud be done for me." "What more dost thou want?" asked his sister. "Summut to help me toa face God, and leuke loike a character thou knows. T'parson said he wod come again it morning, bud I's none be here then. Goa Nancy, and ax somebody what I mun -doa?" "Sal I fetch t'Doctor, he's a rare good liver?" she

inquired. "Oh ! yes," cried Ben, his pallid face flushing with sudden hope, "he'll come I'll warrant." It needed no second call to bring Mr. Hazlehurst to that miserable room. "What do you want with me, Ben?" he questioned with tender sympathy. "I am deeing, sir, and summut sud be done." "Are you afraid?" "Hi, Doctor, I've lived a fearful wicked life, and thear's nouthar clothes, nor jock ready for t'journey." "It's t'Sacrament he's maddling over'd," interposed the woman. "Hush," Mr. Hazlehurst said softly, "his pulse is almost gone," then he gently raised and pil- lowed the dying head on his own breast. Two more hours rolled over and still death lingered, giving the Doctor time to whisper promises of forgiveness to those who truly repent. "You are tewed, sir," said Nancy, noticing heavy drops of sweat on Mr. Hazlehurst's brow, "you had better len me hod him." But Ben opened his eyes and gasped, "hod me yersen, it's most over'd now." And he did hold him until the lad, with sudden energy, cried "I's none flaid, God bless ye Doctor," and expired.'

'Who told you about Ben, Ethel?'

'Nancy herself, and she added with touching simplicity, "it were a grand seet yuh moind, Miss Clifford, to see'a a greeat mon loike t'Doctor hoding Ben and calling him brother."'

'Mamma says Mr. Hazlehurst is a true philanthropist,' remarked Nettie.

'He is, but Yorkshiremen as a rule are all kind-hearted.'

'Are you a native of the West Riding?'

'No, but many of my forefathers were born in the Old Hall, near Micklefield.'

'That is the reason you love the dialect I presume?'

'Not exactly, but I think it possesses a ring of pure music, if spoken correctly.'

'My time is up,' said Nettie, glancing at her watch.

'I believe your uncle has just come,' Ethel replied.

'Mr. Osborn,' announced Sarah, throwing open the door.

'I am afraid my chatterbox will have wearied you, Miss Clifford.'

'Not at all, her visit has been enjoyable.'

A pleasant chat followed, and Ethel promised to go with them to Pudsey if able.

'Are you going to walk, Mr. Osborn?'

'No, the carriage is waiting. Come, Nettie, be quick. I have a pile of letters to write before dinner.'

They soon drove home, and as Nettie passed through the hall a servant said, 'A gentleman is waiting in the drawing room, Miss Singleton.'

'Have you his card?'

'No, Miss.'

She entered softly, but the figure standing at the window seemed conscious of her presence, for he wheeled round instantly. 'Harry!' she joyfully exclaimed.

'My own darling,' was the response.

CHAPTER XXX.

JUBILEE.

'NETTIE, will you go into the shrubbery?' Harry asked.

She looked up quickly, and saw that their fate would soon be decided. 'I will,' was her gentle reply.

They went into a side walk, bordered by evergreens; and for sometime not a word was uttered. At length Henderson said, 'May I inquire why you sent me this letter?'

She read it carefully, then laid her ungloved hand in his and said, 'I never did, Harry.'

'You never did, then by heavens who has?'

'I gave one to Agnes Chester to post,' she replied, with painful hesitation.

'I presume she retained yours and sent me this?' he cried, his handsome face blazing with love and indignation.

‘Oh ! Harry, you were cruel to doubt me.’

‘I know that, darling, but when a man is blinded by jealousy reason totters on its throne. Look ! is not every stroke and curve your own.’

‘Yes, the imitation is perfect ; and it must have been for this purpose that Agnes studied my handwriting. How could she say I wished to be free, for I was engaged to Leonard Hartley.’

‘Forgive me,’ he pleaded, ‘and thank God that her plot has failed.’

‘What will you do with the letter ?’ she questioned, smiling through her tears.

‘Send it to Miss Chester, and demand yours to be at once forwarded.’

‘Don’t be hard on her.’

‘See, your uncle is just going in ; let us join him,’ he replied evasively.

‘Why, Henderson, I thought you were in the Punjaub,’ Joe exclaimed, with evident surprise.

‘I left India on the second of last month.’

‘What made you come home ?’ Nettie asked archly.

‘A letter from Mrs. Larkings. I saw my Colonel immediately ; got leave, and took the first P. and O. boat.’

‘Have you seen Mr. Singleton ?’ Joe questioned uneasily.

‘I went direct to Holly Bank, and obtained his consent to come here.’

‘Nettie is delighted. You have, I see, received absolution, sir.’

Harry glanced across at her, then said, ‘my Priestess has been very gentle.’

‘Glad to hear it. Can you stay over Sunday, and go with us to Pudsey ?’

‘Certainly, I shall not return to Westmoreland without Nettie.’

Osborn looked exceedingly blank, and commenced to whistle.

‘Harry coloured. How is Lister?’ he said, anxious to cover Nettie’s confusion.

‘Dont is ageing fast, but still cheerful, and likes his friends around him.’

Sunday morning rose in cloudless splendour, and the happy birds poured their joyous songs upon the air as Henderson walked to church for the early service; on his return he found Joe in the breakfast room, apparently absorbed with a ledger.

‘Where have you been, Harry?’

‘Thanking God for making heaven and earth so bright to day.’

‘Ah! you are a Christian.’

‘And what are you?’

‘Sit down and eat your breakfast before reading a lecture.’

‘I presume we shall attend the Wesleyan chapel at Pudsey?’

‘Yes, and must be there early. Mr. Dalingtower preaches, and he always draws immense congregations; but see, Nettie, here comes Miss Clifford.’

Henderson turned quickly to observe the new comer, and when he was presented extended his hand with frank cordiality, and the conversation became general.

About nine a small open carriage, drawn by a pair of well-matched bays, drove up; the gentlemen assisted the ladies in, and started for Pudsey.

Meanwhile our old friend, Dont, slumbered in his easy chair; he awoke at length with a start, and cried ‘Ruth, lass, has’t almost done?’

‘Hi! lad; dost thou want thee forenoon drinking?’

‘Noa, bud t’clock is most on ten. Mr. Osborn weant be late; I doa hope they’ll coom i’ t’ new coach, for Isaac says he niver seed a grander turn out. Thear’s a mon sits i’ front wi’ a gold band raand his hat, thou knows.’

‘T’owd one were fearful nice.’

'True, and I dunnut side wi' young men wasting brass. Robinson buying a trap, tews my moind sadly. I reckon it's a freak ov Ann's.'

'He got it reet cheap,' she ventured to reply.

'I care nowt abawt that, a cloath waggon is gud enew to draw only chap to t'market.'

'He's bawn to travel raand about a bit.'

'Len him goa on his awn legs then. I tell thee, lass, it's nowt bud pride, and thou mun get t'devil out ov aar Ann, or warse will coom ov it.'

'Isaac's a careful lad, and thou knows folks dress and live differently to what they did fifty years ago.'

'Hi! honesty and thrift was t' rule i' aar toime; fraud and waste is the motto of to-day. It grieves me sore to leave t' country i' sich a state.'

'Dos't think t' world is getting warr?'

'A seet, lass, I lay; it's wickeder nor it days ov Noah.'

'T' Lord is long suffering,' Ruth said, meekly.

'If he warn't some folks wod fend themselves i' a fix. Robinson's two-wheeled consarn is a rare fish i' Satan's net. I'll be-bund t' owd fellow is chuckling finely ovver Isaac been foiled.'

'Thear's noa harm i' heving a trap; Robinson's none abawt brass.'

'He soon will be, and I war'ent my bit will goa some day i' peacock feathers, and long-tailed coats. Thou sud hey tought thee dauter better, Ruth.'

'T'lass ails nowt, dunnut be soa crabbed; I can leave her a hundred me'sen, and it's natteral Isaac sud want to ride her out.'

'Sho'd be better sarving pigs; t'mare will eat a lot ov corn, and they'll happen want bacon afore t'winter's over'd.'

'Dunnut speak loike that, lad.'

'Hod thee din, I hear t'osses.'

'I think thou's mista'an.'

'Noa I am'ot, see's 'ta they are most here.'

Ruth smoothed down her apron, and Lister pushed the scarlet cap a little further off his brow. 'Gud morning, Maister Osborn, how are yuh, sir?'

'Very well, Dont, I hope you are better.'

'Mich, I thank ye,' he answered ; then drawing Nettie closer to his side whispered, 'Who's that thear chap?'

She coloured violently, so Joe came to the rescue and said, 'This is Lieutenant Henderson, a great friend of mine.'

'Dont's face broke into a broad smile. I'm reet glad to see yuh ; please mak yuh'r sen at hoome, sir.'

Ethel had been speaking to Ruth, but she turned now and said, 'Have you no welcome for me?'

'Bless thee joy, my seet mun be failing or I sud hev seen thee afore.'

'What time does service commence?' asked Joe.

'Two o'clock precise, bud mak yuh'rsens easy, Isaac will leuke out for seats.'

'Do you expect the chapel to be crowded?' questioned Nettie.

'Hi, to t'door hoile.'

'What a powerful hold Methodism has upon you Yorkshire people,' remarked Harry.

'We suck it in wi' aar mother's milk, and larn John's doctrin's afore a b c.'

'Do you keep up to them?'

'Not allus, I've been a backslider me'sen.'

'Bud t'Lord hez called thee again,' Ruth interposed, with tears glistening on her eyelids.

'It were t'day ov Jacob's burrying that I fund liberty.'

'How long is it since he died?' asked Nettie.

'Two years, and he made a grand ending though t'trumpet didna sound.'

'It moight doa and none ov us hear it,' exclaimed Ruth, *hastily*, 'for t'owd man left a glorious testimony.'

'Satisfactory i' ivvery way,' said Isaac, who was busily engaged wiping his shoes on a mat.

'Soa thou's coomed at last, lad;' Dont said, gruffly.

'T'forenoon service is just over'd. We hev hed a rare toime, faather.'

'That's reet. Whoa preached?'

'Mr. Dalingtower.'

'He's t' mon for holding forth both i' Parliament, and a Methodee pulpit.'

'A holy flame burns i' his heart,' Ruth added.

'It's a rare thing to fend a spark ov owd John's fire onywhere i' these days, lass.'

'It is that,' Robinson said, gravely, shaking his head. 'I met Poll on me road to t'chapel, mother; shoo's chuff.'

'Over the forty pund's her uncle Joal left them, I suppose.'

'It'll goa to t'dogs,' groaned Lister. 'T'last toime I seed her sho had put a guady stuffen bird i' her hat.'

'Thou sud hev cautioned t'poor soul,' Ruth said, sorrowfully.

'I dunnut throw pearls afore swine.'

'They are bawn to flit,' Isaac said, ironically.

'Whear tul?'

'Leeds.'

'What mun they do thear?'

'Keep a beer hoose.'

'That'll just suit Poll.'

'Mebby Cressey will teach her better.'

'She is too feeble I fear,' Nettie said.

'Hev yuh seen her lately?'

'Last week. She was so happy, and her little home so beautifully clean, it made me think of Paradise.'

'Her sun will set without a cloud,' Joe remarked, thoughtfully.

'I want to goa intul t'garden to leuke at t'flowers. Will yuh tak me, Maister Osborn?'

'Willingly, Dont.'

'Now I's going to spake a word or two, sir, if ye weant be offended.'

'No fear of that,' laughed Joe.

'I hear ye are to be wed soon, is it true?'

'Yes, my friend.'

'I hope yuh hev chosen a sensible woman that will leuke weal to t'ways ov her household; pianer playing is reet enuff i' its way, so is billing and cooing, but an English mon will swop them both ony day, for a weal cooked dinner.'

'Oh! Dont.'

'Hi! oh don't Dont me, bud depend on it, lad, my words are as true as t'Gospel.'

'Miss Ward is thoroughly domesticated.'

'I's glad to hear it; bud moind, when t'parson hez gotten yuh harnesssed both to pull one way, happen sho'll fling and toss a bit at t'furst; bud tak no gorm, goa reet for'ads.'

'You mean keep the whip hand.'

Lister chuckled, as he responded 'Yuh'll hev to get hold ov it fust.'

'Uncle, where are you?' Nettie called at the moment.

'Here love, do you want me?'

'Mrs. Lister says I shall have time to go to Fulneck before dinner.'

'Thou'll hev to leuke sharp joy,' Dont said, 't'ducks were i' t'oven afore I coomed out.'

'I only want a peep.'

'Off you go, Chicksey,' exclaimed Joe.

Nettie ran away like a fawn, and paused not until the Moravian burial ground was reached. A lovely valley lay beneath, where she had often in girlhood sat reading. 'How true it is,' she exclaimed aloud, 'that the first teachers of theology were poets; and even now, when revelation has fixed our faith on a sure foundation, they yet remain priests in the temple, leaders in meditation, and *interpreters of thought*.'

'Ah ! my child,' responded a voice ; ' but that is not enough, the heart must rest on the bosom of God, or no lasting influence is gained.'

She turned quickly, and saw the stranger of Kirkstall Abbey standing at her side.

' I am glad we meet again,' he said courteously, ' do you reside in Pudsey?'

' Oh ! no ; I drove over this morning with some Leeds friends. My own home is in Westmoreland.'

' Are you a Moravian?'

' No ; are you, sir?'

He smiled, and shook his head ; then said gravely, ' Have you yet learnt to ask Christ to hasten that day, when we shall see Him as He is, and be changed into His likeness?'

' You refer to the second coming of our Lord.'

' I do, and to that great event which must take place on the day of His appearing, the resurrection of the saints, and gathering in of the first-fruits redeemed from amongst men without fault before the throne of God.'

Nettie strove to answer but an irresistible power held her silent, so the gentleman raised his hat and bid her good-bye. She lingered about for a while gathering leaves to keep as mementoes, then returned to Lister's cottage with a well-pleased smile around her lips.

' Just i' toime joy,' cried Dont, wiping his spectacles. ' I want ye to read me this here letter : Sally Hardcastle has browt it wi' her to t'Jubilee.'

' Who is it from?'

' Charlie Hodge, and be what I can mak out he's bawn to coom over'd, and wants to tak her eldest lad back wi' him to Demon's land.'

' New Zealand, you mean.'

' I know nowt abawt it,' he replied, testily, ' bud sur'ly Sally weant len him goa to sich an a place.'

' You see Charlie promises to adopt the boy, and make him his heir,' interposed Joe.

'Then, I'll warrent sho'l goa hersen at efter owd Granny drops off.'

'I sudn't wonder,' said Isaac, 'for wemen are qucer i' thear ways.'

'What are you saying, master?' cried Ann.

Robinson glanced up uneasily, then suddenly became aware that the home-field gate was open and required his attention.

'I wonder you let him talk in that fashion, father,' she said, angrily, 'it is disrespectful to me.'

'Hod thee din, I weant hev thi prate i' this hoose : goa help thee mother, and moind thou maks t'mint-sauce to suit my fancy.'

Ann muttered something under her breath, but obeyed.

'It's all t'fault ov trap riding,' Mr. Joseph ; 'aar Isaac is a decent lad, nob'but soft headed. Bud I'll soon hev done wi' sich muckment, for t'first toime I hev a chance t'owd machine sal be brokken up for kindling.' A moment afterwards he remembered how useless was the threat, and two large tears fell on his paralised hand.

Nettie looked at him compassionately, and immediately changed the conversation by saying, 'Who do you think I have met, uncle?'

'I cannot imagine.'

'The gentlemen of the Abbey.'

'Does he reside in Pudsey?'

'I believe not.'

'Can you tell us anything about him, Lister?'

'Is he a tallish, gud leuking mon?'

'Yes.'

'We are all capped wi' him here ; some folks says he's a Bishop and lives i' Leeds, and others tak him for a Lunden pictur drawer : bud one thing is certain he talks we'al, and preaches a doctrine we ne'er heard afore.'

'Then he does not live anywhere in the neighbourhood?'

‘No, sir, bud t’dinner is on t’table, and ye hev just toime to eat it and goa to t’chapel.’

The service was enjoyable, worthy of Methodism in its primitive days ; and as Joe listened to the impassioned pleading, he repeated those words of Felix, ‘Almost thou persuadeth me to be a Christian.’ The effect of the discourse was visible throughout the congregation, and Henderson noticed tears stealing down Nettie’s cheeks. Miss Clifford’s countenance also exhibited traces of deep emotion ; and the powerful voice of the preacher could scarcely drown the sobbing exclamations that kept breaking out, for the place seemed filled with a cloud, and the glory of God was there.

‘Now, Maister Osborn,’ said Isaac, ‘ye hev seen village Methodism ; next toime ye goa to Lundon, visit City Road Chapel.’

CHAPTER XXXI.

MAIDEN SPEECH.

‘GILBERT, what time is it?’ said Mrs. Singleton.

‘Just half-past four.’

‘Then we have still an hour to wait : Will you have some strawberries?’

‘Strawberries so late as this.’

‘Yes, the finest we have had ; they are just perfection.’

‘Thanks, I will take some gladly.’

She laughed, and helped him bountifully. ‘I had Esther in this morning.’

‘What did she say about Henderson?’

‘Expressed her entire satisfaction, and begged me to hasten the marriage.’

‘Indeed.’

‘We are indebted to her you know, for so kindly writing to him.’

'I wonder who asked her to do so?' he said, with a sharp glance.

'Grace Ward.'

'I thought so ; How does Mrs. Osborn endure the matrimonial yoke this time?'

'Very meekly.'

'William has soon tamed my lady.'

'Nay, Cupid.'

'Well poor Theo had a sorry life. Does she adore your brother?'

'I am astounded at you, Gilbert.'

'What about the election?' he asked, assuming the look of an injured man.

'William intends running for Dewsbury.'

'It will be expensive.'

'I named that, but she said money was no consideration to them.'

'Well times are changed, let us hope the cottages of her tenantry will be improved. Bye-the-bye when does Joe intend to marry?'

'On the 5th of next January. How abominably those men behaved over Ward's book.'

'A complete swindle, but the rogues have not prospered ; for Pawkins is killed, Barnton fled, and Squirrel and Hare collapsed.'

The carriage drove up at the moment, and Mr. Singleton went out to receive his visitors. 'I am very happy to see you Harry,' he said, warmly.

'Have you no welcome for me, papa?'

'Yes, my darling, but run away first to mamma.'

Nettie darted forward through the open drawing-room door, and found herself clasped in her mother's arms.

A happy group gathered round the dinner table, and Henderson declared 'earth had no cloud for him.'

'Do you intend going back to India?' Dora said, saucily.

'No, I shall sell out and settle here.'

Mrs. Singleton's face beamed with smiles, and Russell impetuously exclaimed, 'How pretty you look, aunt.'

Mr. Singleton glanced at his wife with proud admiration. 'She is always lovely, my boy,' he responded, speaking with marked gentleness.

The door bell rang, and a moment after William entered.

'Sit down, and pass the evening with us,' Gilbert said.

'No thanks, Esther and I have promised to visit a poor woman.'

'I am delighted to hear it,' his sister replied.

He walked up to Nettie and said, loud enough to be heard by all, 'Am I to congratulate you?'

The tumultuous blood rushed to her face, and William thought he had never seen a brighter impersonation of joy, youth, and beauty.

Mrs. Singleton rose, and the ladies retired to a small room, where the summer breeze wafted in refreshing coolness and the fragrance of a thousand flowers.

Election time came and passed, and Osborn found himself head of the poll.

'I knew you would win,' Esther cried, joyously.

'You worked hard for it,' he responded.

'I made up my mind you should go, and that was half the battle. When shall we leave for town?'

'My father ordered the house to be prepared last week.'

'Then we will go to-morrow.'

The night came for William to make his maiden speech. Mr. Hazlehurst and Joe were both in the House. 'He is all right, and full of pluck,' the Doctor whispered.

'You think so?' was the anxious response.

'Quite certain.'

True oratory soon makes itself manifest, and William spoke as one inspired; every ear drank in his words, and every eye was riveted. As Mr. Hazlehurst listened to the strain of eloquence the remembrance of the moonlight night by the silvery Thames flashed to his mind, and he felt he

had saved a brother. Presently an honourable member rose, and with frivolous remarks and special pleading,—Old Bailey style,—endeavoured to pull to pieces Osborn's solid arguments. Though he possessed a temper under perfect control, this was too much for his best nature to bear; the clear blue veins swelled on his temples, his brow contracted in disgust, and anger, affording yet another example how impossible it is, even by a life-long effort, entirely to overcome 'Man's innate tendency to err.'

THE END.

RUEBEN GAUNT; THE LEEDS TEMPERANCE NOVEL.

BY MISS HUDDLESTON.

ELLIOT STOCK, LONDON, E.C.

‘Well thought and well expressed. As a tale, full of interest. The characters are obviously drawn from nature, and the practical object of the book is seen in its title.’—*Rainbow*.

‘The Temperance portion of this story, as far as it goes, is impressive and judicious, but rather under than overdone. There is a hearty ring about the Northern dialect employed, and a healthy tone in the Methodism of Rueben and his friends. The true gist of Wesley’s work is grasped.’—*Church of England Temperance Chronicle*.

‘A graphic description of the horrible doings of drink.’—*Methodist Temperance Magazine*.

‘The cause of Temperance, which is making rapid strides in this country, is now promoted by various agencies. Temperance periodicals, and novels are important aids in the work, and amongst the last may be ranked “Rueben Gaunt,” which is dedicated to Mrs. Whiting. Miss Huddleston has on several previous occasions appeared before the public as an author, and here portrays with great power the misery which frequently follows upon intemperance—the poverty brought by it into once-happy homes, and the infamy and degradation which it brings in its train. The scene is laid in Leeds, and an intimate acquaintance with human nature

under many aspects is exhibited, and although a large number of persons are introduced each has some distinguishing characteristic, and stands out well. The authoress is thoroughly at home in the Yorkshire dialect, which she puts into the mouth of several of her characters.'—*Leeds Mercury*.

'A Temperance Story, written in a lively and attractive style. It will doubtless be objected by some readers that the authoress has laid her colours on a little too thickly in describing the evils of drink, but it is to be feared there is ample warrant for even her darkest pictures, and the lessons the work is designed to illustrate may well be considered by all.'—*Rock*.

'For strong, nervous Yorkshire delineations,—both of character and scenery,—and sustained interest in the development of her story, commend us to Miss Huddleston's newly-published work, "Rueben Gaunt." The authoress, we observe, writes with an experienced pen, and though the special object of her work is the advocacy of temperance, she does not allow that theme to run away with her, to the exclusion of an artistic construction of her book. Her characters, all apparently painted from living subjects in the neighbourhood of Leeds, are keenly and incisively drawn, the biting points of her portraitures being secured by the acid of genuine Yorkshire humour. The daily life of both middle and lower classes in the breezy uplands, and manufacturing villages of our favourite county is delineated by a familiar and practised hand, the appreciative touches of individual character being filled in with both spirit and fidelity. It may be urged as an objection to "Rueben Gaunt," that Miss Huddleston has crowded her canvas with too many subsidiary objects; but, on a careful consideration of this point, we feel doubtful whether we could dispense with any minor characters, without in some sense disturbing the harmony and completeness of the work. The incident of the Benedictine Monastery is somewhat startling, and readers may question whether the gay and volatile Jerry Frankling would be a likely party to subject himself to its slavish, ascetic influences; but there is nothing improbable in a man of the world, in some moment of keen remorse for the sins of his

past life, throwing himself into the arms of a community which promises him relief from the conscience-harrowing past, and calm unruffled devotion in the present and the future. If the authoress is rightly instructed as to the practices carried on in these semi-monastic institutions—neither really Catholic nor Protestant in their character—we think she is discharging a duty to society in exposing all she knows about such modern revivals of the hated Spanish Inquisition. How Mrs. Rivers, the interesting sacrifice to the Moloch of drink, manages to escape from the cruel bonds of poverty, neglect, and religious persecution, will be followed with interest by all Miss Huddleston's readers, but we should rather incline to doubt the easy manner in which Mrs. Rivers suddenly attains to the fame and glory of a full-blown successful authoress. Mrs. Rivers typifies the middle-class victim of a drunken husband, while little Slack, the neglected child of the whisky-loving family of the O'Brian's, is the lower-class sacrifice to the same insatiable indulgence. Where the authoress picked up the name of 'Slack' as the pet name of a charming little creature, lost in all the first promise of innocent youth, we confess we are unable to imagine, for neither as a diminutive nor affectionate pseudonym does it hold out any promise of the interesting and poetical creation of the pen it is intended to typify. "Rueben Gaunt," dealing as it does with the monster evils of intemperance, is not only highly tragic but is also deeply pathetic in some of its illustrations; and the authoress has not failed to avail herself of imaginative embellishments, when such extraneous elements tended to give dramatic power to the expression and force to the lesson inculcated in the work.'—*Leeds Times*.

'There is sufficient character and quiet descriptive power in this story to justify the distinction that has been accorded it. Yorkshire country and town life, in its various strongly-marked religious and social phases, afford a rich field for the powers of the novelist, and in this instance the materials it presents have been diligently and skilfully taken advantage of. We can promise the reader a rich treat in the perusal of Miss Huddleston's book "Rueben Gaunt," and we can hardly say more for it than the mere fact that the moral is in the tale and not at the end of it.'—*Fountain*.

‘A Temperance tale of considerable power and originality. Miss Huddleston depicts Yorkshire Methodists with a loving hand.’—*Christian*.

‘Miss Huddleston has written a very interesting and, we hope, useful book. The object is a good one, and the tale keeps up its interest to the end.’—*Baptist Messenger*.

‘Rueben Gaunt is a “Temperance Novel.” The best portions of the work are the descriptions of Methodist tea-meetings, feasts, preachings, burials, and other ceremonials. Here the authoress is quite at home, and these gatherings are graphically and amusingly described.’—*Salford Weekly News*.

‘This is a Temperance tale, with pleasant and appreciative glimpses of Methodist life in England. The story is a little complicated, but so is every real life story ; and as a work of Art it is certainly above the average of Temperance tales, while its spirit is well calculated to promote sobriety, morality, and religion.’—*Advance*.

The Copyright of ‘Rueben Gaunt’ is reserved by the Authoress to this date, June 18th, 1881.

LEEDS:

WALKER & LAYCOCK, BOOKSELLERS & PRINTERS, 37, BRIGGATE.

